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CORRESPONDENCE

The answer is silence

Paris, France

To the Editors: It is understandable that Rev. Edward W. Mullen [Correspondence, December 15, 1989] would be still horrified by what he heard—face to face—from a representative of the Goebbels propaganda ministry in 1944. Indeed the Nazis had planned to enslave the Poles after they had exterminated all the Jews, including children. It should not be forgotten that the Polish suffering exceeded that of any other occupied country. Yet what happened to them and to the Jews is not on the same register. To enslave a people is hideous, to murder it systematically is diabolical. It was at Auschwitz II-Birkenau that the biggest massacre took place, hence the Jewish memory focusing on Auschwitz. There, between 1.35 and 2 million Jews were killed.

Contrary to Rev. Mullen's opinion, the Jews have never "claimed exclusive rights to Auschwitz." As a matter of fact the Poles are the ones who not only claimed it, but have exercised their claim. Until recently, at least—I know it by personal experience—it was possible to visit Auschwitz without ever hearing the Polish guides mention the Jews murdered there. They spoke only, and at length, about the Polish resisters (300,000) killed there between 1940 and 1942. The only Jewish demand is that Auschwitz be left bare of any appropriation. Nobody. Nothing. Horror. Silence.

CLAIRE HUCHET BISHOP

Aquinas & contraception

Lackawanna, N.Y.

To the Editors: In his article entitled "Ratzinger's 'Nature' Isn't Natural" [January 26], Father Sebastian Moore says that the church's ban on contraception is ascribable to its failure to recognize "Aquinas's insight....Aquinas's theorem of a supernatural order."

This is a mistaken view. Aquinas, in the exercise of his insight, produced a precise and stern condemnation of contraception, touching incidentally on the legitimacy of coition in a condition of sterility. The text appears in *Summa against the Gentiles*, III, 122, reproduced in *Of God and His Creatures*, translated by Joseph Rickaby, S.J. (B. Herder & Co., St. Louis, and Burns and Oates, London, 1905). An excerpt: "....Hence it is clear that every emission of the semen is contrary to the good of man, which takes place in a way whereby generation is impossible; and if this is done on purpose, it must be a sin. I mean a way in which generation is impossible *in itself*, as is the case in every emission of the semen without the natural union of male and female: wherefore such sins are called 'sins against nature.' But if it is *by accident* that generation cannot follow from the emission of the semen, the act is not against nature on that account, nor is it sinful; the case of the woman being barren being a case in point."

JOHN SULLIVAN

The author replies:

The insight of Aquinas that distinguished between the natural and supernatural orders was simple and genial. It revolutionized theology in every area. It *demystified* nature and set us free to think about it and, in the present instance, to bring to the question of contraception the insights afforded by biology and the human sciences in the seven centuries that succeeded it.

This change in our understanding was brilliantly highlighted by Dr. Ian Jessiman in the London *Tablet* last year: "Theologians seem to ask themselves, 'What is it in the nature of contraception that caused the ancients to regard it as so evil (as evil as homicide)?' Surely an equally valid and logically prior question is, 'What was it in the ancients' understanding of conception that led them to regard any interference with it as so evil (as evil as homicide)?'" The ancients, Aquinas of course included.

What I am deploring is a remystification of nature in order not to have to face this kind of question. My article is an essay in theological reflection, guided by Aquinas as the main watershed of Catholic theology. I was less concerned to advocate my view on contraception than I was to point to the theological illiteracy implied in the escalation of the ban on contraception to the status, virtually, of divine faith. It distresses me to see the church I love beginning to look like an unreasoning fundamentalist sect.

SEBASTIAN MOORE

Insular science

New York, N.Y.

To the Editors: Thomas E. O'Malley's response [Correspondence, December 1, 1989] to Carlin's "A Tragedy without Villains" [October 6] is one of the most salient examples you are ever likely to find of the insularity that overcomes a scientist when he proceeds to apply the methods of one discipline to the problems of another: "As a scientist I can only see [the church's] reasoning on [abortion] as something from a different century.... When we ask [about the fetus] 'is it alive?'...we are setting up categories." He then whips out his slide rule and prescribes that "the property of belonging to a category is the counterpart of a binary variable...." Hey, wow! I didn't know that, and I'll bet you didn't

(Continued on page 164)

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Free at last

Miraculously, the Book of Daniel tells us, the three bound men Nebuchadnez'zar cast into the fiery furnace emerged unscathed. "And the satraps, the prefects, the governors, and the king's counselors gathered together and saw that the fire had not had any power over the bodies of those men; the hair of their heads was not singed, their mantles were not harmed, and no smell of fire had come upon them."

As it was with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, so it was with the release of Nelson Mandela after twenty-seven years in South African prisons. Mandela, his wife Winnie at his side, miraculously walked away from his defeated captors, his elegant head held high, his former boxer's fist raised in unyielding defiance. Millions watched what seemed like the resurrection of a martyr. There was dancing in the streets of Harlem as well as in the cities and segregated townships of South Africa. Mandela's resolute fight for simple human dignity and equality before the law, his refusal to renounce resistance, even violent resistance, to the racist white minority government, has made him a poignant symbol for people of color and for the oppressed everywhere. In releasing him, the white South African government admitted that the military and political fires of apartheid can exert absolute power over the nation's black majority little longer. Without doubt, the freeing of the seventy-one-year-old African National Congress leader signals the end to apartheid. Unbowed, Mandela now powerfully embodies the hopes and aspirations of South Africa's 25 million blacks. If reason and moral courage prevail, he may come to represent the same things for the nation's 5 million whites.

Obviously Mandela's enormous dignity was forged through great suffering and sacrifice. His sense of himself and his mission seemed equally the fruit of a great faith. That faith is more political and ideological than religious, presumably. But in his lifelong battle to end the racist program of apartheid, Mandela was of necessity acting on "the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen."

Every new world is brought forth by such intangible powers. Much can be said about the shape of a democratic South Africa. Mandela and South African President F.W. de Klerk, his improbable liberator, face dangers from every conceivable side in negotiating a transfer of power. Mandela commands the allegiance of perhaps 45 percent of the black population. To his left is the more revolutionary Pan Africanist Congress. On the right is Zulu Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi, leader of the Inkatha movement. De Klerk is perhaps in an even more fragile position. His National party faces strong, and now galvanized opposition from the Conservative party, which thinks apartheid can survive.

As Mandela himself has urged, economic sanctions should stay in place for the time being. The birth pangs of democracy have begun, but the delivery likely will

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be even more painful. At this moment, however, satraps, prefects, counselors, and men and women everywhere stand humbled before the witness offered by Mandela's life. That witness should give black and white South Africans of good will strength in the difficult days ahead.

Q. WHO WROTE THIS CATECHISM?
A. That's a Good Question

Q. Who made the world? A. God made the world.... Q. Why did God make you? A. God made me to know, love, and serve him in this world, and be happy with him forever in the next. Thus the *Baltimore Catechism* and the pedagogical method to which so many attribute the alleged religious literacy of pre-Vatican II American Catholics.

Other nations had similar catechisms. Indeed, there is scarcely a Catholic old enough to hold an important church position who didn't absorb the faith within some such framework. No surprise then, that what has been described as post-Vatican II theological chaos and religious illiteracy should provoke yearning for a rendering of the faith that is as clear, compressed, and uniform as those catechisms. When it comes to catechisms, there are at least two distinct, but overlapping, issues. One is a question of pedagogy, about which even the professedly undogmatic can be sadly doctrinaire. (Among some religious educators, memorization appears to be one of the few uncontestable mortal sins.) The other is primarily a question of content.

The latter concern was the forcing bed of the *Catechism for the Universal Church*. In 1985, John Paul II convened an extraordinary synod of bishops to examine the outcomes of Vatican II. The synod did not, as some had feared, roll back the council's teachings. But the proposal for a universal catechism found its strongest support in the camp of those who seemed to feel that the council's aftermath was more perilous than hopeful for the people of God. The idea was to do for postconciliar Catholic doctrinal understanding something comparable to what the revised *Code of Canon Law* did for church structures—provide a comprehensive, universal framework from which local variations could take their cues.

The comparison points to the danger. The *Code of Canon Law* very imperfectly reflects the council's perspectives: power over its composition shifted away from the world's bishops, who had done the work of the council, to the Vatican bureaucracy that had often resisted it. Moreover, this narrowed and hardened version of the council has increasingly come to substitute for the council's own documents. It was not unreasonable to fear the same outcome or worse in the case of a universal "compendium of the whole of Catholic doctrine" prepared by authorities hand-picked by curial officials and subject to no independent deliberation and vote of the world's bishops.

Now the provisional text of the catechism is out, and it proves such fears were amply justified. Knowledgeable readers of the text, gathered in January at Georgetown University's Woodstock Center to assess it, seemed to agree that it pointed in one direction, the *status quo ante*. (See Berard Marthaler, pp. 143-46 for an overview; and *America*, March 3, for essays on selected topics.) Our own less-than-expert perusal of the text confirms that scholarly assessment. For the most part, the catechism could have been written before Vatican II. It ignores both the spirit and teachings of Vatican II; in some cases, it ignores the last several hundred years of history, sacred and profane. Among other grave problems: it slights Jesus' ministry and, indeed, his humanity; it rejects the Eucharist as a meal; it is silent about the role of ecumenical councils; it uncritically repeats preconciliar teaching on mortal and venial sin.

Not every criticism aimed at the catechism is justified. Some critics, for example, refuse to accept at face value its clear disclaimer of being a pedagogical model; it is focused on what, not how. It has certain strengths: the centrality of Christ rather than the church in the catechism's structure; its treatment of Judaism; its rejection of biblical justifications for the inequality of men and women.

Recognizing both merits and drawbacks in a refurbished version of traditional textbook theology is one thing. Elevating that theology into a measuring rod for the church's teaching worldwide is quite another. Consider some of the more serious charges against this provisional text:

Inappropriate use of Scripture. Almost every published commentary complains of "prooftexting." The document is lathered with biblical references, sometimes to the point of unreadability. Passages are cited without concern for their original meaning; references are taken out of context and linked together despite marked differences. The last several decades of scriptural scholarship seem to be ignored. The catechism gives readers a scriptural foundation that will crumble when they encounter contemporary learning, and it deprives them of a wealth of insight born of the biblical revival.

Unnecessary detail without distinctions in importance. The catechism treats everything from God's existence to guardian angels, from the resurrection to the relationship between Jesus' joined human and divine natures, his body in the tomb, and his soul descended into hell. Everything is presented as of equal centrality to the Catholic faith.

Evasion of real problems. Despite its apparent comprehensiveness, the catechism passes over questions arising from modern natural science or psychology that would occur to many modern readers. It does not refer or allude to the world of secular knowledge or events. It avoids everyday language in favor of a religiously charged language—but religious language sadly diminished from the rousing words and ideas of a *Gaudium et spes*. The net effect is to make the faith seem like a self-enclosed and self-validating reality. Which points to a further shortcoming...

The neglect of human experience. The catechism is theology from the top down. The human dimension of seeking God, of trying to record God's actions and celebrate the divine presence in history, of ordering community life in ways that respect and mirror the divine spark in reality, is obscured by an abstract, "God's-eye" picture of an eternal revelation, plan of salvation,

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and law of morality.

False and unhistorical synthesizing. Starting by amalgamating the formulas of Gospel writers, St. Paul, and the full-blown doctrinal development of Nicea or Chalcedon, the proposed catechism presents Catholic teaching as all of a piece. Rarely does it acknowledge the historical shifts and ever-present pluralism of views. (A sensitivity to the Byzantine liturgical tradition is evident in the section on sacraments, perhaps to the point, some commentators have said, of overshadowing the Western liturgical legacy; but there is no parallel appreciation of theological pluralism.) Virtually never does the catechism acknowledge the church's own blind alleys in its pilgrimage for truth.

But this is not a theological text to be reviewed like any other. It is meant to serve as the *template* for the church's catechetical teaching. Therein lies the potential damage of its privileging of a single theological option on questions that are open to different approaches.

Catholic bishops around the world, who received the text in December, have until the end of May to return their recommendations to the Commission for the Preparation of a Universal Catechism, chaired by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger. That leaves almost no time for consultation among themselves or with theologians, diocesan educators, liturgists, and catechists. How many bishops will actually have time and the expertise to read a text that is anything but accessible? To study it? To assess all of its topics and presentations? How many have interpreted the text's semiclassified status ("*sub secreto*") to rule out widespread consultation? Certainly many will be tempted to let this document roll on by its own momentum. A fatal error, we believe.

If it is strictly adhered to, a universal catechism, inadequate in its approach and questionable in its content, will injure the church by its alienating pedagogy and its constriction of Catholic doctrine. If national conferences, local churches, or religious educators are flexible in trying to adapt it, it will undoubtedly become another source of fractiousness between those who support the local adaptations and those who see heresy in any departure from the Vatican-established template.

Thomas Reese, the convener of the Woodstock meeting, summed up the matter: "If this were a text submitted to an ecumenical council, it would deserve an overwhelming *'non placet'* from the bishops" (*Tablet* [London], February 24). No council is in the offing. But the bishops need to insist firmly upon their teaching office. At a minimum, they should ask for time to consult on redrafting the catechism. Even better, they should transform a danger into an opportunity and make the very process of revising the document a catechizing moment for the church. They should propose widespread discussion at every level and invite comment from the church's ecumenical partners.

As John XXIII said in opening Vatican II, "Our duty is not only to guard this precious treasure, as if we were concerned only with antiquity, but to dedicate ourselves with an earnest will and without fear to that work which our era demands of us, pursuing thus the path which the church has followed for twenty centuries." This open, fuller discussion, the bishops should insist, is what "our era demands of us."

ET CETERA

HOW THE FLIGHTY HAVE FALLEN Along with valentines, February brought the demise of four seemingly invincible public figures or institutions. Most surprising was news that insolvency had come to the firm of Tyson & Co. Heavyweight champion Mike Tyson was flattened and relieved of his worldly crown by James "Buster" Douglas.

But for real bloodshed one had to turn to Wall Street. There, the thud people heard was the sound of Drexel Burnham Lambert Inc., the "junk bond" and corporate takeover champeen, hitting the hard surface of reality. Few mourners were in attendance when the financial fairyland built by the lengendary Michael R. Milken went down for the count, except perhaps for the five thousand employees who were pushed onto the street and into the unemployment lines. It is tempting to draw a tidy moral about the consequences of avarice from Drexel's ignominious end, but who would listen?

Less instructive was the purging of "60 Minutes" resident curmudgeon Andy Rooney. CBS suspended Rooney for three months and lightened his wallet by a reported $200,000 for illiberal pronouncements about homosexuality and alleged but denied derogatory remarks about blacks. What Rooney actually said about blacks does not appear to be pertinent. Perceived or alleged insult is sufficient grounds for evaporation in the insubstantial world of TV. Some suggest that since Rooney had thrived in that hall of mirrors, he must suffer its capricious penalties as well. Rooney is not our favorite commentator. But really, Galileo had a fairer trial.

Finally but most extravangantly, New York is awash with the "news" of the pending divorce of skyscraper- and casino-builder Donald Trump and his wife of thirteen profitable years, Ivana. From newspaper front pages to television to radio to idle coffee shop chatter, there is no sanctuary from this plague of prurience. Even in the midst of personal scandal, Trump seems to be doing what he does most passionately—putting his name on everything. Is there no law prohibiting this kind of graffiti?

So much seeming turmoil; so few apparent consequences. Meanwhile, Lent is upon us, and sackcloth and ashes have rarely seemed more fitting reminders of the human condition.

INVASION AFTERMATH

PANAMA: WHOSE AGENDA?

ONE CRISIS MAY LEAD TO ANOTHER

When General Manuel Noriega walked out of the nunciature, Panama's fifteen days in the spotlight ended. A CNN reporter waiting in line for his boarding pass candidly told me they were now shifting their attention to the Soviet Union. Developments in Panama, however,

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are sure to resurface as policy problems for the United States. At the moment, concerns focus around U.S. responsibility for economic reactivation. Over the longer run the future of the U.S. military bases in Panama is likely to prove problematic. One indication is the fact that a U.S. congressman just back from a trip to Panama could breezily summarized his understanding of the 1977 Carter-Torrijos Treaties this way: "the Panamanians get the canal and we get the bases"—seemingly unaware that the treaties oblige the United States to give up the bases by the end of 1999.

The base issue should be kept in mind in connection with what I see as the most positive outcome of the invasion, the possibility that the new Panamanian government might opt not to have an army.

Demilitarization has considerable rational appeal. Panama does not have to defend its borders; on one side stands armyless Costa Rica, and on the other, the eastern half of the country leading to Colombia is a dense jungle with no road of any sort. Panamanians see themselves as a trading country, and would like to assert their neutrality. If they had only a police force and not an army lusting after late model weapons, the savings could be applied to education, health care, and other programs, as is done in Costa Rica.

In addition to such rational considerations, one can sense a visceral reaction to the country's recent experience. Repudiation of the Noriega regime is universal; in addition, some people, particularly those involved in the Civic Crusade, which led the anti-Noriega campaign and is the core of the new government, see the twenty-one years of military rule, including the populism of General Omar Torrijos (1968-1981), as negative.

As Vice-President and Minister of the Interior Ricardo Arias Calderon explained the plan to me, the bulk of the new Public Force would carry out police functions. In addition there is to be a small, professionally trained body for carrying out investigation, and some specialized combat units for dealing with serious armed threats, whether from potential guerrilla groups or possibly international drug rings. Many of the functions that Noriega's military had carried out, such as running the prison system, immigration, and transportation, would pass into civilian hands, and the new security bodies will no longer be financially independent but will be accountable to civilian authorities.

Two immediate difficulties come to mind. The crucial question is not whether a security force be designated an army or a police force, but how it behaves. Labor leaders with whom I talked strongly suspected that the new government would be repressive. They are convinced that with Panama awash in weapons, the wealthy might easily pay to have their dirty work done by death squads, as in Guatemala or El Salvador. One economist believes that the government will inevitably have to use repression to quell dissent against the economic policies it will be forced to enact. More than one person sensed a witch hunt in the making. "Communism may be dead," observed a priest, "but anti-communism isn't."

Nationalists fear that demilitarization would make it all the easier for the United States to argue its need to retain the bases since Panama would obviously be unable to defend the canal. Ironically, whereas in neighboring Central America the business sector relies on military repression, in Panama the same sector is the most enthusiastic over the possibility of demilitarization, while it is nationalists and the miniscule Left that is most suspicious of the proposal.

It is worth noting that the Santa Fe Committee, whose 1980 report served as a blueprint for the Reagan administration's Latin America policy, in a similar document issued in 1988 looked beyond the Noriega crisis to assert the need for discussions on "a realistic defense of the canal after the year 2000," which would include "the United States's retention of limited facilities in Panama...for proper force projection throughout the Western Hemisphere."

Actually the canal seems largely indefensible. Destruction of the dams that maintain the water level of Gatun Lake at its center would in effect pull the plug on the canal and put it out of commission for a long time. Or, as a former U.S. military attaché speculated on "Nightline," terrorists could attack ships passing through the canal to the point where insurance companies would no longer issue policies. Small specialized units could patrol the areas around the canal for such eventualities, but no conceivable Panamanian force could defend the canal from a strategic air attack. In fact, the best guarantee for the safety of the canal would be a stable, prosperous, peaceful—even demilitarized—Panama.

The Santa Fe Committee's "proper force projection" no doubt means the ability to intervene militarily in Latin America, carry out military exercises and surveillance, or simply to intimidate putative enemies. As the Pentagon and its allies scramble for a new raison d'être in the post-cold-war world, Panama may assume even greater importance.

Vice-President Arias Calderon believes the possibility of Panama's internal demilitarization can be unlinked from that of the bases and he implied that the changes sweeping the world should eventually make it easier for the United States to relinquish the bases as the treaty demands.

Thus Panama's hopeful steps toward demilitarization are taking place in an atmosphere of ambiguity. In that connection it may be germane to recall that Costa Rica's decision to abolish its army was not immaculately conceived. It was the outgrowth of the 1948 civil war in which two thousand people died. The war was fought against a coalition that had instituted social reforms—which the leader of the opposing and ultimately winning side, Jose Figueres, largely adopted. In abolishing the army, Figueres calculated that he was eliminating a potential threat to himself, should he become president.

Some Panamanians are more concerned about a crime wave with which the still small Public Force seems unable to cope. Unprecedented numbers of people are joining gun clubs to learn how to shoot.

The most pressing immediate concern is economic reactivation. Unemployment is estimated at around 35 percent. In cash terms the greatest cost incurred in the invasion was not the physical destruction, calculated to be $100 million, but the looting, in which merchants lost an estimated $700 million in merchandise and $200 million in plant and equipment. These losses, plus the effects of the U.S. economic sanctions, whose burden fell on the business community and the general public more than on Noriega himself, explain why Panamanians were saying the

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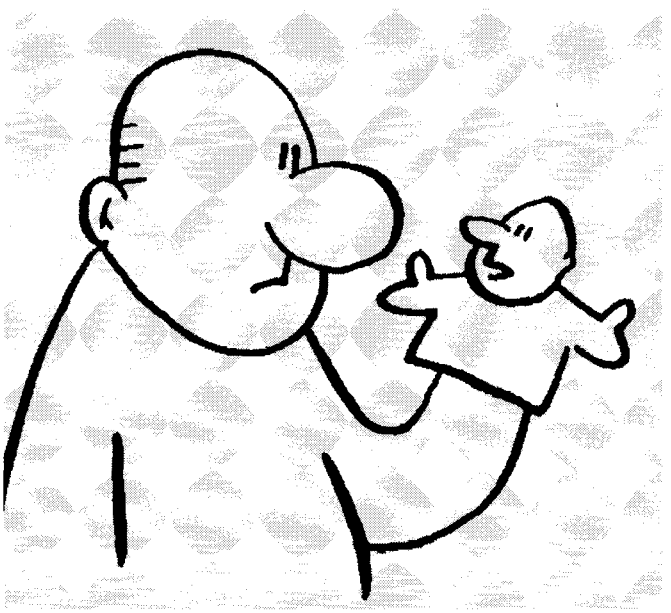
U.S. should provide $1.5 to $2 billion in new aid.

The Bush administration has accepted responsibility for the physical reconstruction, but regards the loss from the looting as an insurance matter. Predictably, the insurance companies, most of them foreign, argue that they are not liable for acts of war, while the merchants' representatives view the looting as robbery, for which they are covered. President Guillermo Endara welcomed the Bush administration's proposal of $1 billion in aid, half of which is to be used for debt servicing—the Noriega government stopped payment a couple of years ago—and the other half for development projects and economic reactivation.

Panama's economic future seems to entail more than reactivating the existing economy. As an economist explained it to me, the deeper economic crisis antedates Noriega's fallout with the United States. Although it has an agro-export sector (bananas, coffee, beef, sugar), Panama's economic mainspring has been its "transit function": during colonial times, the gold shipped through Panamanian ports to Spain; during the California gold rush, a transisthmian railroad; and during this century, the canal. Starting in the 1960s Panama became a major finance center to the point where it now has 110 banks (only 17 of them Panamanian). Since its currency is the dollar, Panama has been an attractive place for Latin American oligarchs and businesses to keep deposits—and inevitably for money laundering. In the early 1980s deposits reached $32 billion (as compared with the country's GNP of $5 billion at that point). Panama was also a haven for "paper" companies. Through internal transactions with their Panamanian affiliates, transnational companies can evade taxes. The Free Trade Zone in Colon functions essentially as a warehouse operation for merchandise, largely Japanese, destined for sale in Latin America and the Caribbean. In the go-go atmosphere of economic growth, the Torrijos government could continue to borrow. The numerous high rises visible in TV reporting on the invasion reflected the period of expanding banks, financial services, and borrowing.



"Wait a minute—What's my motivation?"

The Latin American economic decline and debt crisis brought that kind of growth to a screeching halt in 1982. Deposits plateaued and then declined (to $8 billion today) and the market for the goods of the Free Zone fell off. Increasing the debt was no longer an option, and in fact even under Noriega the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank began to pressure Panama toward structural adjustment (reduced public expenditures, and in a more general sense reorienting the economy away from services and toward production). Labor leaders and economists fear that the new government will take steps in this direction. Possibilities suggested to me include Hong Kong-style industries (perhaps with capital from Chinese fleeing Hong Kong) and efforts to stimulate nontraditional agricultural exports. Although the new government will be trying to stimulate employment, it will be laying off large numbers of government workers. Thus observers expect that the economic measures may produce social discontent, which the government might find it necessary to quell with repression.

The Bush administration is already urging Panama to modify its bank secrecy laws to enable U.S. authorities to investigate suspected money laundering. However, a representative of the Banking Association of Panama assumed it was in Panama's interests to maintain its present legislation. He also told me that the amount of money laundered in Panama is not as large as is often imagined.

Panama's political future is unclear. No one doubts that the ticket headed by Guillermo Endara won the election last May overwhelmingly—I heard no calls for new elections. Moreover, those occupying cabinet and other top administrative positions are acknowledged to be upright and competent. To some observers, however, they look like a rerun of pre-1968 civilian politics. Unless the new government can take measures that serve the needs of the poor majority, both urban and rural, many Panamanians might sour on the new order.

One test of whether the new government is truly democratic will be its tolerance for a broad spectrum of opposition. That might include some version of "Torrijismo," labor movements, and pressure groups from popular sectors.

These various issues—demilitarization, the bases, economic recovery, the political future—all point toward the U.S., which holds most of the cards. Bush administration representatives insist publicly that the new Panamanian government must rapidly take charge. However, accompanying the crucial U.S. dollars is a large contingent of military and civilian planners and experts, who, one fears, may constitute a shadow government, laying down the parameters and leaving only the execution (and unpopular decisions) to the Panamanian government. Installed by U.S. troops and dependent on massive aid, the new government will have little leverage when it comes to defending Panamanian interests in any clash with the Bush administration.

The U.S. invasion to resolve one crisis may engender others.

PHILLIP BERRYMAN

Phillip Berryman, a writer and translator, lived in Panama and Guatemala for twelve years. A revised version of his Inside Central America *(Pantheon) will be published this fall.*

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TIDES OF CHANGE

LAY MINISTRY COMES OF AGE

In this astonishing time we have learned three things about change. It can come when we do not expect it. It can come in ways we could not foresee. And it can come with breathtaking rapidity. Most of us—even the most dogged in the peace movements—did not expect the sudden, apparent end of the cold war. It had seemed a condition of international life. Those who did envision it did so in terms of relaxing tensions between the two superpowers, of improving relations and trade, and of gradual disarmament and troop withdrawal. Few, if any, among world leaders expected a Gorbachev and an irresistible, peaceable rising of peoples.

It occurs to me that those who work and hope for change in the church—especially those concerned with the position of women and the laity—may be equally overtaken by events in the not too distant future. It came to mind when I was reading of the success of a modest, middle-of-the-road effort called Education for Parish Service (known by its acronym, EPS). EPS came into being a decade ago as the brain child of church historian, Sister Joan Bland, SND. According to its founder, EPS programs exist: "First, to help meet the urgent need of the Catholic church in the Western world to fill the vacuum created by the sharp decline in numbers among priests and religious. Second, to help meet the critical need of religious education for adults in a sophisticated and increasingly secularized society so that they can lead authentic Christian lives and bring the gospel message into their homes, their work places, and their communities."

Among those who bring about change there always seem to be two kinds of people: first, those who will settle only for the ideal and keep their eyes and their efforts focused on the distant goal; and, second, those who settle for incremental change—doing what can be done within the boundaries of hard and intransigent reality. EPS members are definitely of the second group.

In 1989 a consultation of priests, religious, and lay persons in San Francisco resulted in the official conclusion of that archdiocese that the "first order of business is the training of lay ministers to lead several ministries in the face of fewer priests." The same conclusion has been reached in other dioceses throughout the world.

In 1978, however, when EPS began, the concept of lay ministry was still threatening to many in authority—hence the use of the less threatening term, "parish service." Although the need was all too clear—the decline in vocations was already precipitous, and the exodus of priests and religious was at full tide—few among the remaining clergy were inclined to share responsibility. Nevertheless, EPS set about seeking students for an intensive adult education program in Scripture and postconciliar theology, and eight influential pastors in the Washington D.C., archdiocese responded and sent the first students.

Education for Parish Service stands out among adult education programs in several ways. An emphasis on academic excellence was made possible by the proximity of the original foundation in Washington to numerous theological institutions from which a distinguished faculty was recruited. A truly dedicated student body was assured by the time requirements of two days a week for two years or an evening a week for four years. And the education received was always seen as a preparation for service to parish or diocese.

EPS students did not have the discouraging experience of many lay persons who acquired knowledge and skills only to find no place to offer their gifts or, worse, to have them refused. Today 825 EPS graduates serve in four dioceses in the U.S.—Washington, D.C., Arlington, Bridgeport, and San Francisco—and in the vicariate of Rome. Programs are beginning in the Archdiocese of London and requests for programs have come from the Archdiocese of Brussels in Belgium and from other U.S. dioceses.

Although EPS students include men, primarily in an evening program and in the programs abroad, the great majority of its graduates have been women—originally for the most part homemakers, "the group who often have some control of their own time." The most passionate advocates for women's ordination are apt to see the dedication of these women as the shoring up of an exclusively male clergy and the women themselves as blind to the injustice they suffer in the church.

On the other hand, their service can be seen as a penetration of the whole ministering aspect of the visible church—and, as such, a predisposition to change we cannot now foresee. It is worth remembering the view of Cynthia Wedel, the Episcopal churchwoman who broke many barriers for women in the church and eventually achieved one of its highest offices, the presidency of the National Council of Churches. She did not want ordination, she used to say, to the priesthood as it was, and by that I assume she meant the priesthood as an exclusive and ruling caste. She looked forward to the time when women would join a servant clergy chosen, like the bishops of the early church, by the people.

In my lifetime lay women have become visible and present in the church in ways that would have been unthinkable in my youth. They are in the sanctuary as readers and eucharistic ministers. They march before the celebrant carrying the Book of Books in the entry procession. They carry the offertory gifts. They plan liturgies, organize parish and ecumenical celebrations. They prepare catechumens and the young for the sacraments. They carry the sacrament to the sick and dying. They assume leadership in parish councils and an ever-increasing variety of parish social services. All this, if we look back, is an astonishing change from the times, only a generation ago, when a woman, preferably a nun, could lift her voice in church only to utter the responses at Mass when a male server was not present—and then only from a priedieu outside the altar rail.

Education for Parish Service and similar

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lay ministry programs ride two tides of change: the perhaps providential decline in vocations in a time when the number of Catholics continues to increase as well as the great demand for, and increase in, programs of social service in parishes and dioceses. Who knows where these tides may lead? □

OF SEVERAL MINDS David R. Carlin, Jr.

'MAKE WAR, NOT LOVE'

DATING GETS DANGEROUS

Once a semester I conduct an informal survey on boy-girl violence among a class of my community college students. I ask how many are aware of friends or relatives who are involved in situations in which boyfriends hit girlfriends. Every semester about 50 percent to 75 percent of the class respond positively; they say they are aware of such violent situations; many, in fact, are aware of more than one situation of boyfriend-on-girlfriend violence.

Now my students rarely come from low-income/inner-city neighborhoods, where one might expect the level of violence in general to be high; instead, nearly all of them are from middle-class suburban communities. And it is boyfriends and girlfriends I ask about, not married couples; so the violence they are aware of takes place among dating couples ranging in age, I'd say, from sixteen to twenty-one.

This is not a scientific survey, of course, and it proves nothing about levels of boyfriend-on-girlfriend violence in America at large or even in the communities my students come from.

But when, in an equally unscientific way, I ask people closer to my own age bracket—people, let's say, forty years old and up—whether they were aware of boyfriend-on-girlfriend violence back in their high school or immediate post-high school years, they say no. They cannot recall any of their friends or relatives telling them about hitting or being hit.

This is not to say, of course, that hitting girls was never done in the good old days. No doubt it was; but victims and perpetrators were reluctant to talk about it. Just because we didn't hear about the phenomenon in those days doesn't mean it didn't happen. But wait: Today's victims and perpetrators are still reluctant to talk about it. For every violence-ridden couple my students learn about, there are certainly others, perhaps many others, they don't hear about.

I have concluded—again very unscientifically—that there is a whole lot more violence among dating couples today than there was in my day. As I grow old and cranky, this affords one more proof of the thesis I have been expounding for years in order to annoy my children, namely, that the world has been in a state of steady decline since the end of my boyhood.

Remember the bumper-sticker slogan that was popular twenty years ago: "Make love, not war"? This was a succinct and clever bit of propaganda against the Vietnam War and in favor of the sexual revolution. Unpacking the slogan, it implied that aggression was linked with repressed sexuality while a regime of sexual permissiveness would lower the level of conflict and violence in the world. It was at about this time, too, that large numbers of people began coupling objections to violence in movies and TV with indifference to explicit sexuality in movies and TV. Increasingly, violence was described as "obscene," while objections to pornography became hopelessly out of fashion.

Now, if we moderns had even a touch of classical education we would have been suspicious of the "Make love, not war" slogan; we would have questioned the theory that sexuality and aggression are opposites that repel one another. For the ancients told a tale about Mars and Venus, who were quite a romantic item. If the god of war and the goddess of love were opposites, they were opposites who attracted. They were caught in bed together, you remember, by the husband of Venus, Vulcan, who trapped them by throwing over them a chain-link net he had made especially for that purpose. Then he invited the rest of the Olympians to gaze at the trapped couple and have a good laugh.

The ancients understood, then, that there is a natural affinity between Venus and Mars; between sex and aggression. It is significant, too, that they married Venus to Vulcan, the least glamorous of the gods, the homely god with a limp, the only working-class god, who earned his living by hard manual labor at the forge. It is as if they were saying that sexuality is a potentially explosive force, so we had better link it with sobriety, routine, industriousness—lest it run out of control.

Like most people my age, I have always had some reservations about the sexual revolution. But people of my generation tend not to express those reservations very publicly for fear that the motive lying behind our reservations is not so much concern for the well-being of the young as envy that the generations who came after us have been having much more sexual fun than we ever had. So we pretend to be much more tolerant and understanding than we really are. We are aware, of course, that the sexual revolution has brought us a vast number of abortions, soaring rates of out-of-wedlock births, and a frightening spread of sexually transmitted diseases, including AIDS. But someplace in the back of our minds we remember "Make love, not war," and we think that these negatives are perhaps balanced out by improvements in character that have been realized among sexually active youth. They may have abortions and sexually transmitted diseases, but at least they've become kinder and gentler now that they are freed from the aggression-breeding hang-ups that afflicted early generations.

Well, I've concluded that that rationale won't wash. They are more likely to sleep with their girlfriends nowadays, but they are more likely to hit them as well. The search for a justification for the sexual revolution will have to be carried on in a different quarter. □

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WEEDING OUR BACK YARD

U.S. POLICY BEHIND THE PANAMA INVASION

KARL BERMANN

"Propinquity creates special political relations," wrote George Weitzel, President Taft's envoy to Nicaragua during the heyday of gunboat diplomacy and big-stick interventionism. Weitzel was justifying the existence of a government installed by U.S. occupation troops in Nicaragua. He could just as well have been referring to current events in Panama. And as one of those who helped establish our imperialistic reputation in Latin America, no doubt he would feel entirely at home in the Bush State Department. The Panama invasion has a long history behind it. Yet the familiar buzz words that flood the mind when considering U.S.-Latin American relations—"back yard," "big stick," "gunboat diplomacy," "Monroe Doctrine," "sphere of influence," "imperialism," and the like—cloud as much as clarify the substance of the policies being pursued.

Taking for granted that "propinquity" creates special relations, and the corollary assumption that it's this country's prerogative, by virtue of its dominant position (if not by divine right), to define those relations, the U.S. has woven together over two centuries a special Caribbean Basin policy. We don't hear much about it because the State Department doesn't print it up and pass it out at press conferences. Nonetheless, that policy continues to guide all our significant foreign policy decisions and actions in that region, just as it has since it first began to take shape with the Louisiana Purchase.

Elaborated in state papers, policy discussions, and think-tank studies, our Caribbean Basin policy consists of a set of four supposedly vital interests that policymakers defend and conditions they seek to preserve. The first encompasses concern directly related to the physical proximity of the Caribbean Basin—the U.S. "third border" as it is often called. The strictly military component is known as "maintaining a secure southern flank." Longstanding strategic thinking counsels that the U.S. avoid or eliminate any threat that might require deployment of significant military forces in defense of the southern frontier. As part of the Monroe Doctrine, this policy has sought to prevent extrahemispheric powers from establishing a foothold in the basin. It assumes, incidentally, that no Latin nation can or will itself become a significant power. U.S. global force projection presupposes a docile "back yard" that doesn't require the allocation of major military resources for its defense, yet provides secure reserves of strategic raw materials.

Cuba violates this doctrine in the eye of our national security establishment. That in large part explains the Bay of Pigs invasion and the subsequent efforts to eliminate the "Cuban threat" by assassinating Fidel Castro. It also explains the refusal to improve relations with Cuba. Paradoxically, however, the policymakers tolerate Cuba because to do otherwise—that is, to invade—would violate the "economy of force" aspect of the southern flank doctrine. It would tie up hundreds of thousands of troops and a large part of the U.S. military arsenal in a long and costly war just where the planners seek to avoid committing them—with incalculable consequences for the strategic posture elsewhere.

That's not to say there aren't other important factors weighing against such an invasion—the domestic and international political consequences, for example. But even these relate to the question of "economy of force." Reagan's advisers judged the Grenada invasion feasible because they were convinced it would involve only a small commitment of forces for a very short time. Thus it would not disrupt the strategic balance in Europe or Asia and could be over and done with before opposition had a chance to organize. As things turned out in Grenada, they were right. Bush's advisers obviously calculated that the Panama invasion could be carried out in the same "surgical" manner. We should note, however, that they do seem to understand that Nicaragua is in a different league and that an invasion there would be prohibitively costly, at least under present circumstances. One can only speculate, however, on what the calculations might be were the easing of tensions in Europe to make greater military resources available for use in the Western Hemisphere.

Panama was certainly not a military threat to the United States. But to have Noriega, a renegade one-time CIA asset, loose in a region in ferment, heading a country that was once a secure base for our low-intensity warfare operations (itself the expression

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of the "economy of force" doctrine), without doubt gave national security hardliners nightmares.

While the military aspect of the "secure southern flank" is by far the longest-standing concern related to the physical proximity of the Caribbean Basin, it is by no means the only one. Before the Civil War successive U.S. administrations worried that slave uprisings or emancipation in the Caribbean might spark rebellions among slaves in our own South. Today security analysts list the drug traffic and the flow of Caribbean Basin refugees among their "spillover" concerns. Drugs, of course, provided the major public rationale for the Panama invasion, but available evidence suggests drugs were merely a pretext. Allegations of Noriega's drug connections long predate his falling out with Washington. Though such charges, involving other high Panamanian officials, go back at least to the mid-1950s, they never caused serious problems between the U.S. and Panama as long as that country's leaders were cooperating on other matters. In any event, it is highly unlikely under present conditions that any Panamanian government could be free from the corrupting influence of drug money.

The second component of U.S. Caribbean policy has to do with maintaining the security of "sea lines of communication"—bureaucratese for the shipping routes that crisscross the area. Trade between the East Coast and Latin America, the East Coast and Asia, and domestic intercoastal commerce all passes through the region. A large portion of our trade, including trade with Europe, transits the Caribbean Basin en route to and from Gulf Coast ports—the Gulf itself is part of the basin. The express goal of Thomas Jefferson's commissioners in negotiating the Louisiana Purchase, which gave us our "doorstep" on the Caribbean Basin, was to obtain New Orleans as a secure outlet for Midwest produce.

The Panama Canal is still important as one of these "sea lines of communications," though not as important as it once was. Still, the canal retains its place as a symbol of U.S. interest and presence. This symbolic value has often caused its security to be offered as justification for intervention in the Caribbean when the real causes lay elsewhere. President Bush listed canal security and the integrity of the canal treaty among his invasion goals. But these, like the drug issue, were merely handy rationales. U.S. leaders have traditionally offered a laundry list of reasons for our frequent interventions in the basin, apparently on the theory that the practice increases the marketability of the action in question and reduces the likelihood that any single justification will be scrutinized closely.

The third component of Caribbean Basin policy involves defending the various U.S. economic interests—trade, investments, and raw materials. The basin is the fourth largest foreign market for U.S. goods (behind the EEC, Canada, and Japan), taking about 14 percent of our exports. It plays a dominant role in supplying us with two strategic raw materials—85 percent of our imported bauxite and 70 percent of our imported refined petroleum products. Although it holds only 8 percent of all U.S. foreign investment, this figure accounts for 32 percent of our

investments in the third world—traditionally a source of superprofits. Most of the investments in the basin are concentrated in Mexico and Venezuela, but Panama's share is about $5 billion, more than the five Central American countries together. Panama is not a major U.S. trading partner, nor does it produce vital raw materials. But it is the site of an important oil pipeline and is also a major regional financial center.

There is no reason to think Noriega threatened any of these economic interests. Nevertheless, the uncertainty and economic dislocation resulting from the U.S.-Noriega confrontation was bad for business, and this must have furnished an incentive, albeit a secondary one, for the U.S. to solve the Noriega "problem" sooner rather than later.

It is the fourth and final component of Caribbean Basin policy that made the Panama invasion practically inevitable. This involves U.S. prestige and credibility. A 1983 Rand Corporation study for the Air Force called the Caribbean Basin "the cradle from which the United States arose to become a world power." Because our country has always dominated the region, the national security establishment believes any change in that relation will reduce our prestige and credibility. Or, in the words of a 1984 study commission headed by Brent Scowcroft, President Bush's national security advisor, "Events in the Caribbean are a significant manifestation of the effectiveness of the United States as a world power.... Failure to deal maturely and effectively with events at the doorstep is likely to be taken at home and abroad as yet another sign of declining U.S. power."

No country in the basin is more symbolic of our traditional domination than Panama, and that made Noriega's nose-thumbing all the more intolerable. Put this together with his international isolation, his lack of popular support at home, and the fact that his army was not a credible military deterrent, and Noriega became a target Washington simply could not resist.

On occasion, U.S. leaders have tried to convince Latins that the big stick was a thing of the past. With World War II looming on the horizon, Franklin Roosevelt sought through his Good Neighbor Policy to undo the damage done by his predecessors in order to win hemispheric allegiance. Military interventionism was to be a thing of the past—good neighbors had subtler methods of attaining their ends. In 1947 Harry Truman presided over creation of the Rio Pact alliance and, the following year, the Organization of American States (OAS). These bodies had a threefold utility for the United States: First, they would preserve the spirit of the Monroe Doctrine by preempting UN involvement in the Western Hemisphere (as provided under Articles 51-53 of the UN Charter); second, they would herd the other Americans together under Washington's cold-war umbrella; and third, they

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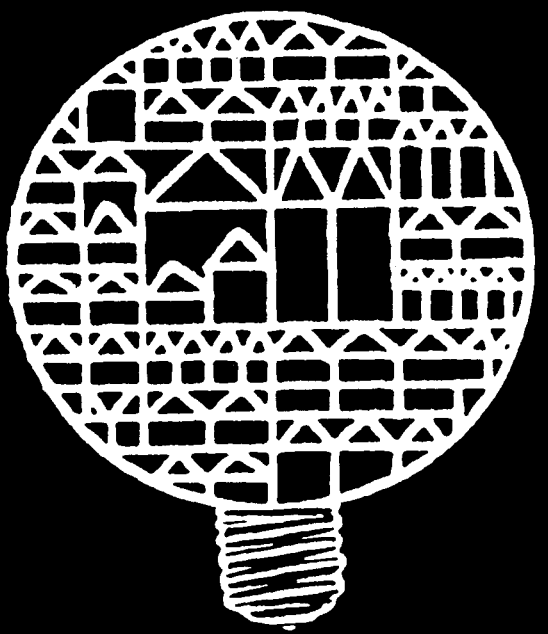

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would avoid the bad feeling of the past by replacing unilateral U.S. intervention with collective intervention (under U.S. supervision). Article 15 of the OAS Charter says, "No state or group of states has the right to intervene, directly or indirectly for any reason whatever, in the internal or external affairs of any other state."

The system worked according to plan through the mid-1960s. Taking its cue from Washington, the OAS ostracized Cuba, and in 1965 fronted for Lyndon Johnson's Dominican Republic invasion (nominally an OAS operation). By 1978, however, as the Somoza regime crumbled in Nicaragua, the cold-war glue could no longer keep the OAS stuck to our coattails. Responding to the pull of Latin nationalism, the once deferential organization rejected a Carter administration proposal to send a "peacekeeping" force to Nicaragua like the one sent to the Dominican Republic thirteen years earlier. In 1983 Ronald Reagan ignored the OAS altogether, giving the Grenada invasion the "collective" fig leaf of the hitherto unknown Organization of East Caribbean States.

Dispensing with collectivism altogether, Bush sought sanction for the Panama invasion in a clause of the 1977 Carter-Torrijos Treaties that allows the U.S. to intervene if the Panama Canal is threatened. Ironically, by providing that the canal will be under sole Panamanian jurisdiction by the year 2000, the treaties were intended to unburden U.S.-Latin relations from a last irritating vestige of the big-stick era.

William Faulkner wrote, "The past is never dead. It's not even past." Although he referred to the southern United States, his comment is perhaps even more relevant to the greater South beyond the Gulf of Mexico. Beating the drums for Jeffersonian expansionism in 1804, Joseph Chandler hailed the Louisiana Purchase as "the commencement of our anticipating hopes" for an empire that would ultimately stretch from the North Pole to "the vertical sun of Darien"—today's Panama. Ninety-nine years later, Theodore Roosevelt bragged that he "took Panama" to build the canal and show that the Caribbean had become an American lake. Now George Bush has retaken Panama, perhaps proving the adage that history repeats itself as farce. The tragedy, apart from the body count, is that a Caribbean Basin policy fashioned in the days of Manifest Destiny, geostrategic Darwinism, and the white man's burden, still guides a Washington too anxious to prove its power in a changing world.

For the moment it's back to business as usual in Panama. When the dust clears from the U.S. invasion, drug money will surely find its way to the highest echelons of the Endara government. And as Panama's rulers resume their historic role as the junior partners of the United States, Washington is likely once again to find its interests inclining it to look the other way. The invasion's lesson for the Caribbean Basin is not that you don't mix with Medellin, but that you don't mess with the U.S. It's a lesson the government that owes its existence to our invasion will be only too anxious to prove it understands. But Latins have a memory we don't. Long after President Endara and his mentor President Bush are gone, Latin Americans will remember our invasion and the arrogant policy that prompted it. □

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'WE CANNOT HIDE YOU FROM JESUS'

JEWISH FUGITIVES AMONG POLISH CATHOLICS

EMANUEL D. THORNE

My father, Leon Thorne, was a Jew from Galicia in southern Poland. When the Germans invaded his part of the world in June 1941, he and his family were rounded up by the Gestapo. My father and his brother were sent initially to work camps and later to concentration camps; his first wife, sister, and elderly father were murdered.

By mid-1943, my father had managed to escape from Janover Camp, a notorious extermination center, and to join four other Jews who were being hidden by two Polish Catholic families in a cellar. Just before Christmas 1943, their Polish caretakers, Stanislaw Nendza and Franz Janiewski, announced that they had a proposition to present. Naturally, my father and the other Jews hiding with him were very anxious about what this proposition might be. Their lives could depend on it.

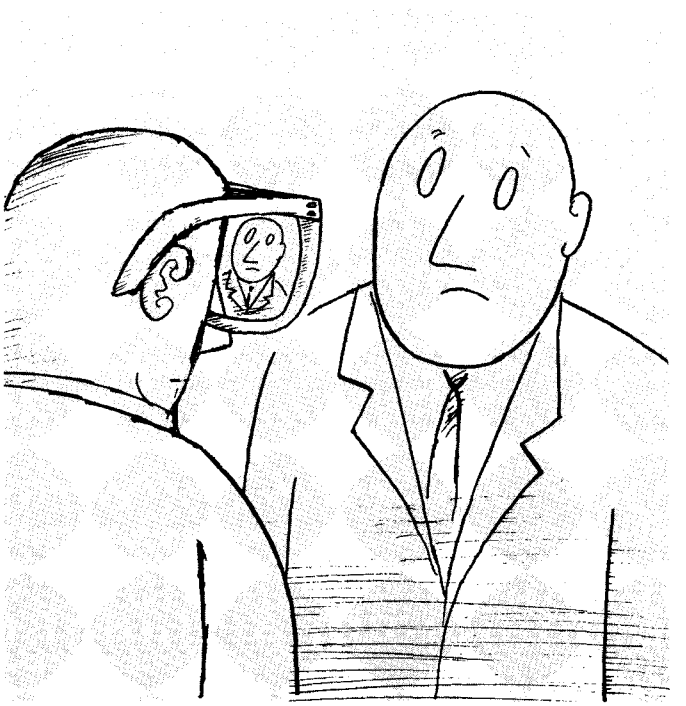
In his memoirs, my father writes:

> On Christmas Eve, we had our answer. All four of them—two married couples—came down into the cellar in their holiday finery, their faces solemn. We held our breaths. One of the women was first to speak. Her voice was hoarse and nervous:
>
> "Listen carefully, my dear friends," she said. "I don't have to tell you that outside there are no more Jews. They have all been killed and we are the only friends you have left in the world. We have been hiding you from the Germans these last few months and we can go on hiding you until this war is over. But we cannot hide you from our Lord Jesus. He knows you are here, and if it is his will to annihilate the Jews, he will find a way to have you discovered by the Germans. And if Jesus wishes that you should die, we will not be able to help you."
>
> How were we to escape the wrath of Jesus, who our Polish caretakers thought was using the German Gestapo as his agents? Simply by converting to Catholicism.

One may believe that the church under Pope Pius XII actively saved some Jews in secret (and there is evidence of this); or that the church was indifferent to their fate (and there is evidence of this, too); or that the church would have liked to help Jews but was constrained from doing so for geopolitical reasons. What is undeniable, however, is that honest, humane, simple Polish peasants could believe, based on the teachings and actions of their church, that Jesus might want the Jews to die, and that by saving Jews they might be acting against the wishes of God, and therefore sinning.

This year will mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of Vatican Council II's historic declaration absolving Jews of the murder of Christ, and affirming that the rise of Christianity did not nullify the special covenant Jews had with God. The document, *Nostra aetate* ("In Our Time"), proclaimed on October 15, 1965, was supposed to have put an end to official Catholic anti-Semitism, in word, tone, and deed.

However, recent events, such as the Auschwitz incident last summer, permit a glimpse of how much more still needs to be done. While the threats and admonishments from Poland's primate, Cardinal Joseph Glemp, seemed archaic—"Dear Jews, do not talk to us from a position of a nation raised beyond all others and do not dictate..." and "Esteemed Jews...if there is no anti-



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polonism there will be no anti-Semitism"—they also seemed to find resonance among some Catholics here and abroad. When New York's Cardinal John O'Connor condemned Cardinal Glemp's statement on the Jews and acknowledged that many Catholics are anti-Semitic, he was roundly criticized by some influential Catholics.

Even more distressing to me was a series of homilies on the theme of Pentecost offered by Pope John Paul II while the Auschwitz incident was in the news. In two of these homilies, the pope chose to advance a theological position that has served as the traditional Christian rationalization for the persecution of Jews. In an August 2 discourse on the beginnings of Christianity, the pontiff stated that God had covenanted with the ancient Israelites to be "his special people...on condition that they remained faithful to his law. But the history of the Old Testament," the pontiff continued, "shows many instances of Israel's infidelity to God. Hence, God sent the prophets as his messengers to call the people to conversion, to warn them of their hardness of heart, and to foretell a new covenant still to come, [a covenant that] was established through Christ's redemptive sacrifice and through the power of the Holy Spirit." The pope returned to the "broken covenant" theme in his homily a week later.

Since the earliest days of the church, Christian believers have drawn a whole range of practical conclusions from that ancient premise. To them, it meant, in the words of Malachi Martin, "that the sufferings of the Jews were to be understood as part of their punishment for the crime of having rejected Christ and their original destiny; and that Judaism was a useless thing, an invalid ethic, an invalid way of life, an invalid method of worship, which had been rendered pointless by the advent of Christ."

The concurrence of the pope's homilies with the Auschwitz affair may have been no more than an unfortunate coincidence. However, it is important for the church not to appear to be yielding to forces for retrenchment. The message of *Nostra aetate*, therefore, bears recalling. On the theme of the broken covenant, the document acknowledges that, despite the rejection of the Gospel by large members of Jews, "now as before, God holds them most dear, for the sake of the patriarchs; for *irrevocable are his gifts and calling*—such is the witness of the apostle." And regarding the crime of deicide, it states, "True, the Jewish authorities and those who sided with them pressed for the death of Christ; still, what happened in his Passion cannot be attributed indiscriminately to all Jews then alive, nor can it be attributed to the Jews of today....The church's being the new people of God notwithstanding, *the Jews may not be presented as rejected or accursed by God....*" (Emphasis added.)

The new course set by *Nostra aetate* for Jewish-Catholic relations was prompted largely by a recognition of Christian complicity in the murder of Jews during World War II. Pope John XXIII, who called Vatican Council II and set its agenda against great internal opposition, was reported to have composed, three months before his death, the following prayer of reparation that he intended to be read aloud in all Roman Catholic churches on Good Friday:

> We are conscious today that many many centuries of blindness have cloaked our eyes so that we can no longer either see the beauty of thy chosen people nor recognize in them the features of our privileged brethren.
>
> We realize that the mark of Cain stands upon our foreheads. Across the centuries our brother Abel has lain in the blood which we drew or shed the tears we caused by forgetting thy love.
>
> Forgive us for the curse we falsely attached to their names as Jews. Forgive us for crucifying thee a second time in their flesh. For we knew not what we did.

I, a Jew, exist at all because of the courage and humanity of Catholics. Not only my father but also my mother was saved by a Catholic. After her mother, two younger sisters, and a brother were taken by the Germans and killed, she managed to escape and find refuge with a Lithuanian priest, Father Paukshtis. She reports, as others have, that, in her desperate search for refuge, she perceived all persons and institutions clearly identified as Catholic—priests, nuns, churches, and monasteries—as potential sources of sanctuary.

But surely this does not surprise. Jews hold Christians to high moral standards precisely because they accept Christ's moral teachings. Thus fifty years after the war, it remains incomprehensible that the Holocaust was committed, not by pagan Mongols, but by Christians in Christian societies.

Jews as well as Catholics must hold onto the vision expressed in the prayer of John XXIII. Jews must remember that when Catholics, such as those who saved my parents, acted heroically and humanely, it was because, whatever else they had been taught about Jews, they also had absorbed Christ's teaching, "love thy neighbor." A renascent Jewry with its own state of Israel must not turn inward with bitterness and give up on dialogue with Catholics. At the same time, while a Jew may not tell a Catholic what to believe, it is proper to remind Catholics of their history and of the consequences of their beliefs, in the hope that they will be vigilant against the revisionist tendencies that have recently found official expression in some church circles. □

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OLD WINE, OLD WINESKINS

A PROVISIONAL TEXT OF THE UNIVERSAL CATECHISM

BERARD L. MARTHALER

The bishops of the Catholic world have on their desks copies of the "provisional text" of a *Catechism for the Universal Church* (CUC). The English version, made available to the U.S. bishops at the end of December, has some 3,700 numbered paragraphs filling more than 400 pages. The bishops have until the end of May to send recommendations and comments to Rome that will assist the working committee, as it says in an accompanying note, "to complete what is lacking, to abbreviate what may be too detailed, and to unify the style and presentation."

The immediate impetus for the CUC was the extraordinary session of the Synod of Bishops that met in 1985 to evaluate the results of Vatican II. Fears that the synod might be the occasion for turning back the achievements of the council proved unfounded, but the perception of some bishops that many of the reforms and changes needed consolidation found voice in the proposal of Cardinal Bernard Law of Boston that a universal catechism be prepared. The synod ended in recommending that "a catechism or compendium of all Catholic doctrine regarding both faith and morals be composed, that it might be as it were a point of reference for the catechisms or compendiums that are prepared in the various regions." On July 10, 1986, John Paul II appointed the Commission for the Preparation of a Universal Catechism headed by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger and consisting of twelve prelates, six of them curia members and six bishops from around the world. Two Americans, Cardinal William Baum and Cardinal Law, are members; the seven-member drafting committee includes Archbishop William Levada of Portland, Oregon. Forty unnamed experts are said to have been consulted.

The draft now under consideration is modeled on the *Roman Catechism*, published in 1566 after the Council of Trent. Like that catechism, also called the *Tridentine Catechism*, this one is structured around four "pillars": the Apostles' Creed, the Sacraments, the Ten Commandments, and the Lord's Prayer.

Though not without its shortcomings, the *Roman Catechism* was an overwhelming success in its day. The Protestant Reformers had made effective use of the printed word "to subvert the Catholic faith." St. Charles Borromeo and the three Dominican friars that he enlisted to help him with the project judged that it was not the "heavy tomes," presumably works like Luther's *Large Catechism*, Calvin's *Institutes*, and the *Heidelberg Catechism* that were causing the trouble. The "errors" in these works were easy enough to detect. The danger came from pamphlets, the popular catechisms, that "disguise their errors under the appearance of piety." Trent's answer, paradoxically, was not to mandate a small catechism that might rival Luther's in popularity, but to call for a compendium of doctrine.

The *Roman Catechism*'s full title—*A Catechism for Pastors from the Decrees of the Council of Trent by Order of Pope Pius V*—identifies its audience. Leaders of the Tridentine reform recognized that catechesis could not be reduced to print. It is essentially oral, a pastoral activity that depends on informed and zealous preachers and teachers. The purpose of the catechism was "to instruct pastors, and others who have the care of souls, in those things that belong properly to pastoral care." In turn they were to accommodate the instruction to the ability and intelligence of their listeners.

The audience for the *Roman Catechism* was an undereducated clergy engaged in pastoral work who preferred clarity to speculation. The four headings—the Apostles' Creed, the Sacraments, the Commandments, and the Lord's Prayer—provided a practical framework for almost everything that a Christian needs to learn. This fourfold division had come into vogue around the beginning of the fourteenth century, and was used by Luther and Calvin in their catechisms. With this common ground, the Catholic position on such questions as the nature of faith, sacraments, and law was definitively presented as a corrective to the teachings of the Protestant Reformers. The *Roman Catechism* explained and defended the faith without being polemical in the sense that it explained the sacrament of penance, the invocation of the saints, indulgences, and other Catholic beliefs and practices then under attack without naming the adversaries. The arguments were often subtle, but they were not missed by the cognoscenti of the sixteenth century. For example, the ordering of the parts, traceable to St. Thomas, stands over against Luther's law-gospel theology and Calvin's teaching on church and sacraments.

Although it is a hefty tome, the *Roman Catechism* is not a summa explaining all the dogmas of the Catholic faith. It emphasized basics, material that would be most helpful to pastors and teachers in their ministry, but it left much unsaid. It is a document of its time, the product of a more or less homogeneous culture in which adversaries spoke the same language, read the same books, and were united in their concern for the future of the

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church, however different their views of the church might be. Catholics and mainstream Protestants held much in common. It was the purpose of the *Roman Catechism* to focus on the differences.

Despite its aim of defending the faith, the *Roman Catechism* is generally positive in tone and fairly comprehensive in presenting doctrine. Though it proposed to establish "one standard and prescribed rule for handing on the faith and for instructing the Christian people in all the duties of the Catholic religion," it recognized the need to adapt the instruction to the ability, cultural background, and particular circumstances of the learner. The Thomistic influence is unmistakable but, in the spirit of Trent, allowance is made for other schools of thought in the Catholic tradition. This spirit, along with clear objectives and a sensitivity to specific pastoral needs, recommends the *Roman Catechism* as a model for the new *Catechism for the Universal Church*.

In fact, the prologue announces that the CUC's plan "is based on the great tradition of the catechisms both of the Protestant Reformation (M. Luther, J. Calvin), and of the Catholic Reformation of the sixteenth century." The *Roman Catechism* is cited as "a noteworthy example" of "how the ministry of catechesis draws ever fresh energy from the councils," and John Paul II is quoted as describing it as a "first rank" summary of Christian teaching. It gave rise "to a remarkable programme of catechesis" in the church and led to the publication of numerous catechisms. The unmistakable implication is that the *Catechism for the Universal Church*, drawing its inspiration from Vatican II, will register similar achievements.

How does the provisional text of the CUC compare with the Tridentine compendium?

The CUC is addressed to a more diffuse audience than the pastors and clergy of the *Roman Catechism*. The prologue quotes Cardinal Ratzinger: "This catechism is intended for those whose responsibility it is to compose and/or to approve national and/or diocesan catechisms. It is therefore intended first of all for bishops, as teachers of the faith." The prologue then extends the audience: through the bishops, it is "intended for those who draw up catechisms, for catechists, and so for the whole people of God."

The limited but specific objective of the *Roman Catechism* was to correct the teachings of the Reformers. Here it stands in the tradition of Gregory of Nyssa's *Great Catechism* and Augustine's *Enchiridion*. In today's parlance, these were "source books," and that, in fact, seems to be what the Extraordinary Synod had in mind when it urged "a catechism or compendium of all Catholic doctrine regarding both faith and morals" that might serve as "a point of reference" for regional catechisms and compendiums.

In its current form, the CUC attempts something more, and therefore achieves something less. There are in fact two catechetical traditions, the one represented by Gregory's *Great Catechism* and Augustine's *Enchiridion*, and the older, practical catechesis exemplified by Cyril of Jerusalem's prebaptismal catechesis and the mystagogical homilies of Ambrose, John Chrysostom, Augustine, and others; that is, homilies intended to nourish the lifelong conversion of the faithful. They explain the baptismal Creed in the context of the rite itself. The early church also possessed numerous commentaries on the Lord's Prayer, beginning with those of Origen and Cyprian in the third century. But even before these were written, the handing over of the Lord's Prayer had become one of the formal steps in the rites of initiation. ("Moral" catechesis, as is evident from Paul's Epistles and the *Didache*, dates from the beginning of the church, but it was not generally based on the Ten Commandments until the thirteenth century.)

In attempting to straddle both of these catechetical traditions, the *Catechism for the Universal Church* loses its focus. It does not measure up to the *Roman Catechism* as a compendium of Catholic doctrine, nor is it satisfactory as an example of mystagogy in the context of the church's celebration of baptism and Eucharist.

The *Roman Catechism* has been severely criticized for its inadequate treatment of the sacraments, but its deficiencies are characteristic of medieval catechesis. Relying on Thomas Aquinas, the catechism presents sacraments almost exclusively in doctrinal terms and the liturgy as rubrics. Categories of matter and form are used to explain the sacraments, and transubstantiation is the focal point of the Mass. The presentation reflects points at issue between Catholics and Protestants, but its outlook is far removed from patristic catechesis. In the mystagogy of the ancient church, salvation was linked to the paschal mysteries, and the sacraments were explained in the context of liturgical celebration.

Vatican II sought to retrieve this ancient tradition and practice in calling for the revision of the liturgical and sacramental rites. Though there are frequent references to the documents of Vatican II, the CUC does not acknowledge so radical a change. In attempting to reconcile the liturgical reforms of the council with the scholastic categories of the past, the CUC uses the *Roman Catechism* as a mold rather than a model. To be faithful to Vatican II, the CUC must adopt the framework of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) which embodies the vision of church that shaped the council. The RCIA provides a focus for all pre- and postbaptismal catechesis, including the explanation of the Creed and the Ten Commandments.

The *Roman Catechism* shaped the provisional text of the CUC in other ways. For example, the CUC's prologue emphasizes that believers not only profess and celebrate their faith, but live it and bear witness to it, in the words of Pope John Paul II, "by a life modeled on the Beatitudes." Yet the heart of the section on "Life in Christ" (Part III) is not the Beatitudes but the Ten Commandments, which the CUC calls the "framework for Christian morality" (0014). The CUC makes several generalizations that are true if the *Roman Catechism* is taken as normative of the Catholic catechetical tradition. For example, the Ten Commandments are "a classical structure for Christian moral teaching" and "catechetical writers saw the Decalogue as a privileged expression of the 'way of life.'" Before the thirteenth

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century, catechetical writers, when they dealt with the Decalogue at all, followed Augustine's *Enchiridion*, expounding them in the context of the two great commandments of love of God and love of neighbor (Matt. 22:40). Although the CUC alludes to this tradition (3248-49), it treats specific moral issues under the headings of the Ten Commandments. The Beatitudes are lost in a series of generalizations about the New Law (3124-31). The treatment of the Beatitudes is one of the weakest sections of the entire catechism.

Despite the inherent limitations of making the Ten Commandments the framework for Christian morality, the contents of this section represent a significant advance. In the years after Vatican II catechetical texts and resources produced in North and South America, taking their lead from the bishops, addressed social, economic, and ecological topics in the context of gospel teaching. European texts generally focused on individual conscience and interpersonal relations. Even the *General Catechetical Directory*, which appeared in 1971, for all its emphasis on freedom and responsibility, does not develop the themes of peace, justice, and the meaning of life in the modern world so prominent in *Gaudium et spes*. Although the placement often seems forced, the CUC uses the Ten Commandments to present a catalogue of modern issues from biogenetic research, collective sins, responsibility for the environment, mass media, and professional codes to international relations and terrorism.

The determination to organize all the material under the headings of "four pillars" of the *Roman Catechism* makes the CUC's reflection on the Lord's Prayer seem an afterthought. The *Roman Catechism* itself departed from a practice that went back to Thomas and the earlier Augustinian tradition, which organized catechetical instruction under the headings of faith (the Creed), hope (the Lord's Prayer), and charity (the commandments of love). In the *Roman Catechism*, the Lord's Prayer is integral to an extensive catechesis on the nature and practice of prayer and thus to the catechism as a whole. The *Catechism for the Universal Church* relegates the Lord's Prayer to an epilogue where it appears as an appendage of secondary importance.

The *Roman Catechism* was very much a product of its era, adopting a structure that had come into vogue in the fourteenth century (and which Luther and Calvin had accommodated to their own theologies) with the purpose of presenting a corrective to the teachings of the Reformers without engaging them in polemics. In taking the *Roman Catechism* as a model, the *Catechism for the Universal Church* should be more attentive to the spirit than to the text of the sixteenth-century work. If it is really to be a catechism for the 1990s, a catechism published in the post-Vatican II era—a period in which the lack of Christian unity is recognized as a major obstacle to evangelization and catechesis—it must give prominence to the *Decree on Ecumenism* and find a way to incorporate in its contents the insights of the ecumenical dialogues.

The *Roman Catechism* is held up as a model because it gave

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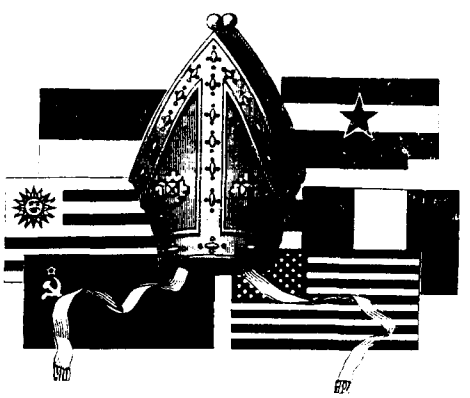

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rise "to a remarkable programme of catechesis" in the church. But this is to give it too much credit. The success of the Tridentine Reform did not rest on the intrinsic worth of the catechism alone. The catechism was only one piece in the broad strategy of raising the level of education of pastors and the clergy who had the responsibility for preaching and catechizing the faithful. It went hand in hand with Trent's reform of seminaries and the seminary curriculum, including a call for more and better Bible study. Trent also undertook the reform of the liturgy, bringing a uniformity to the Latin rites that had not previously existed. The common expression of faith owed as much to the *Roman Missal* (perhaps more) as to the *Roman Catechism*, both of which played major roles in shaping the spirit, language, and theology of the Tridentine church.

In the same way, no matter how well crafted, a *Catechism for the Universal Church* cannot carry the burden for a renewal of catechesis in today's church. It will take its place alongside the 1983 *Code of Canon Law*, the revised sacramentary, the new lectionary, the *General Catechetical Directory* (GCD), and all the other pieces in the panoply of Vatican II reforms. The council mandated the GCD to provide a clear definition of the nature, purpose, and means of catechesis and practical guidelines for carrying out the church's catechetical mission. Unless the final draft of the *Catechism for the Universal Church* is presented as a companion piece to the GCD, and is permeated with the same spirit and pointed in the same direction as the liturgical reforms, it will further fragment the catechetical movement. The GCD gives norms and guidelines, but it is the liturgy and Scripture that must provide the context and focus for any program of catechesis that claims to take its inspiration from Vatican II. Catechesis is the work of the believing, praying, witnessing community, and it is no more possible in the twentieth century to chain it to a book than it was in the second and sixteenth centuries. It is the spirit, not the text, of the *Roman Catechism* that should be the model for a *Catechism for the Universal Church.* □

SCREEN

LOVE STORIES

'DAISY,' 'ENEMIES' & BEST OF '89

Once you get the set-up, *Driving Miss Daisy* is unsurprising: it's a mixed-sex, mixed-race, gerontocratic version of "odd couple" and "buddy" formulas so common lately. But what a couple! Jessica Tandy is a rich, 1940s Southern widow whose son (Dan Ackroyd) insists on getting her a chauffeur (Morgan Freeman) when she becomes too frail to drive. Tandy snorts, grumps, and scowls, but her resentment over the loss of her independence gives way to grudging respect and liking for Freeman, then a mutual alliance against the younger world. In Bruce Beresford's direction of Alfred Uhry's screenplay (from his Off Broadway stage hit), Tandy and Freeman perform a tour de force. We know generally what's going to happen; but the acting, directing, and genially comedic writing are so well calibrated that it doesn't matter.

Warner Brothers was anxious about *Daisy*, marketing it slowly, then watching it top *Variety* charts in late January. They never thought an adapted play, with two veteran actors, without sex or violence, would sell in an age of Batmania. But American demographics are changing, with some good results: the "greying of America" increases the chances for the adult and literate to succeed. Veterans like Tandy have taken advantage of this by shaping strong roles (*Cocoon*) that reflect the needs of the new older audience. *Daisy* doesn't often get as deep as the Geraldine Page/Horton Foote collaboration, *Trip to Bountiful*. But in two final scenes, Tandy pulls out all the stops in coming to terms with the finalities of aging; in the last, she gracefully yields to Freeman the feisty independence that is her life force.

Freeman is one of the best actors around (now on screen also in *Glory*). He has to play second fiddle in *Daisy*, a quiet, sweet counterpoint to Tandy's sassy sourpuss. With his dignity, patience, high-pitched voice, and folksy intuition, his acting is a gem of elegant understatement. Ackroyd also helps. Fatter in this film than ever before, but also better, he liberates himself from "Saturday Night Live" clone comedies and shows brains and feelings rather than slick, sick wit.

Another pleasure in *Daisy* is Beresford's feel for ambiance. An Australian in love with our South (*Tender Mercies* and *Crimes of the Heart*), he shoots Tandy only in middle and long shots in the first half of the film, framing her so often against the contours of her old house that it too becomes a character. He doesn't push symbolism and lets his actors, not the cameras, do most of the work. Given the two leads, this is not a bad idea.

Enemies, A Love Story is so fine for so long that one goes away unsatisfied at the flat, troublesome conclusion. Up to that point, Paul Mazursky plies his best film magic ever, using a story by Isaac Bashevis Singer to transcend previous works like *Down and Out in Beverly Hills* and *Moscow on the Hudson*. They were funny, but with a certain ineradicable vulgarity. Mazursky's source in Singer (Mazursky co-authored the screenplay as well as directed) raises him a number of notches. *Enemies* has a moving, delightful balance between nervous comic edginess and tragedy. Too bad that when all the pieces are finally assembled the film doesn't have a place to go.

Enemies stars Ron Silver (most recently in David Mamet's *Speed the Plough)* as Holocaust survivor Herman Broder in Coney Island in the later 1940s. His wife, Yadwiga (Marge Sophie Stein), is a plain, peasant Polish woman who saved Herman by hiding him from Nazis. But Herman is also involved (uptown, in Pelham) with Masha (Lena Olin), a Holocaust survivor who tries to bury memory in flamboyantly energetic lust. Naturally, Herman's original wife, the intellectual Tamara (Angelica Huston), shows up in Manhattan, though he thought the Nazis had killed her. The film blends genuinely funny bedroom farce (and Singer's spectacle of Herman as a mock-heroic Lothario) with the weight of remembrance that burdens Herman's life. Mazursky reinforces

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the latter with noir-like photography, to which he adds a lively recreation of New York's richly ethnic postwar ambiance. The plot and design fuse perfectly when Herman becomes bewildered by a subway sign with arrows pointing three different ways for Brooklyn, Manhattan, and the Bronx, a transit version of Herman's choice.

No one could choose which actress is better. Huston comes on strong; ethnic typing suits her (*Prizzi's Honor*) better than romantic loftiness (*The Dead*), though her best scene here lies in recalling her and Herman's murdered children. Olin is ferocious, with volcanic reserves of bold sensuality and anger on immediate call. Stein has to do the dirty work as one who normally gets dumped on; some literary critics see this as a sad undercurrent in Singer's work, a stereotyping of Gentiles into a massive, subtle Polish joke. Stein redeems the role, especially when she first meets Tamara and when, shocked at Herman's irreligion when she tries to convert to Judaism, she lapses into Christian prayer.

The conclusion raises complex issues of religion and ethnic identity, but in a disguised form. Unless I am wrong about the last shot, Tamara symbolically gets back her children and Yadwiga is softly but firmly put in place. One understands the strong sentiment within Judaism for more Jewish children after the Holocaust; maybe it should have been faced more frankly here. Technically, their descent must be matrilineal, a complication which the film gingerly sidesteps and the photography strongly subverts. But a greater problem with the conclusion is Mazursky's (or Singer's) failure to drive the story of Herman and Masha to a convincing end, either with the other characters or each other. Stories can end sadly; but theirs ends without punch, in a dramatic whimper. Volcanoes like Masha don't fall dormant without a more fiery struggle.

Besides *Enemies, A Love Story*, what were the best films of 1989? Following my custom, I will not name ten; I didn't see everything (missing, for example, the often praised, low-budget independent works *True Love, Roger and Me, My Left Foot* and *Drugstore Cowboy*). Readers are urged to round out, or revise, my list with their own choices.

Glory tops my list, despite its weaknesses. And in spite of its strengths, I do not include *Born on the Fourth of July*, a big winner come Oscar-time. *Henry V* improves Shakespeare; it was the best adapted screenplay of 1989.

Some small, nonepic films were also excellent. Despite the hype around it and a thin plot line, I liked *sex, lies, and videotape* for its casual texture and naturalistic acting, as well as the use of avant-garde tactics (a welcome relief) in the service of old-fashioned values. Spike Lee's *Do the Right Thing* vividly portrayed New York's black/white tensions; in all the fuss over its racial element, few noticed how, in Sal the pizzeria owner, Lee created the best image of a white, working-class man on film in the 1980s. Strong understanding of laboring people also flavored the English *High Hopes*. Its scene at Marx's grave in Highgate Cemetery was poignant and prophetic: despite our need to pursue real social justice, "Marx" is dead.

The Fabulous Baker Boys was notable for the ensemble work

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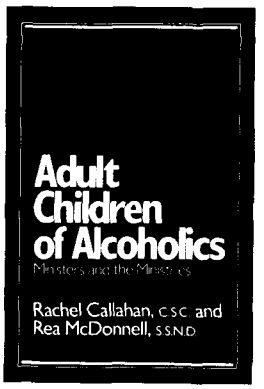

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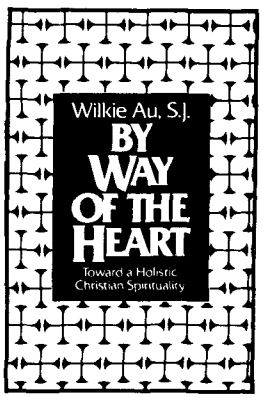

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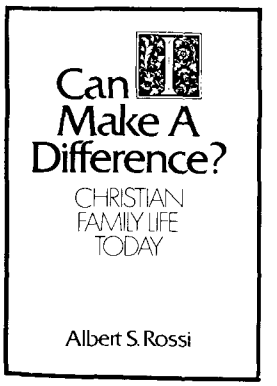

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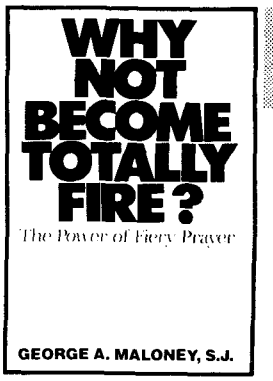

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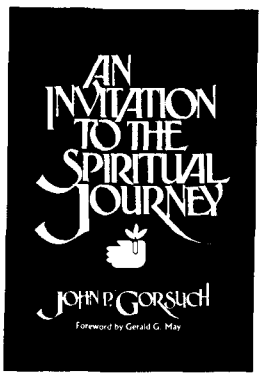

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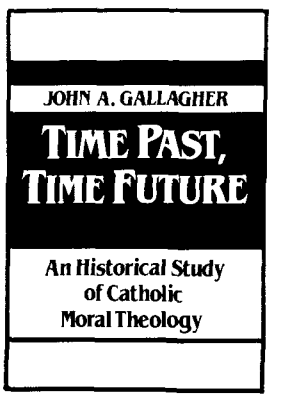

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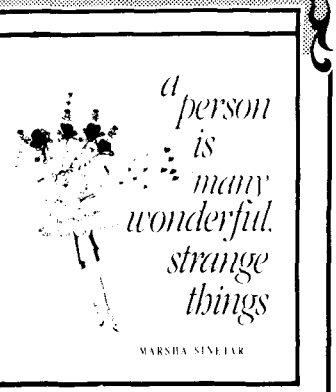

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of Jeff and Beau Bridges and Michelle Pfeiffer; her piano number was easily the most memorable scene of the year. And—the critics' dogmatic unsentimentality be damned—I liked *Field of Dreams,* not for the baseball, but for its brave stab at naked emotion. "Honorable" mention goes to *Batman,* partly for its sets and partly for revealing the real Jack Nicholson. This is the Age of the Joker; Nicholson is its prophet. There are few larger forces corrupting our society that intelligent people can do more about than trendy cynicism and the cult of irony. All they have to do is become really self-conscious and second-guess such mocking wit. But will they? TOM O'BRIEN

STAGE

OF MEN & ANGELS

'CITY' & 'A FEW GOOD MEN'

Molly Haskell began her recent rumination on movie adaptations of novels (*New York Times Book Review,* January 28, 1990) by conjuring "those two archenemies of the thirties and forties, the Vulgarian Producer and the Sensitive Writer," and then laying them to rest. As it happens, they are alive and doing very well on Broadway at the Virginia in the new musical, *City of Angels*, by Larry Gelbart (book), Cy Coleman (music), and David Zippel (lyrics). Gelbart, who began as a gagman in radio, is not central casting's idea of "the Sensitive Writer," but Mervyn Rothstein's *New York Times Magazine* interview (October 8, 1989) suggests that the musical is "a reaction to Gelbart's anger" about the quarrel over who contributed what to *Tootsie*. Can it be that there is seriousness beneath the glitz and gimmickry of *City of Angels*? I prefer to think not, and Gelbart's setting the show "in the late 1940s" seems to indicate that, if there is trouble in Movie City, it belongs to those back-then days. Of course, the happy ending in which Stine (the writer) and Stone (his hero) join forces to defeat "the Vulgarian Producer" might be seen as Gelbart's getting a bit of his own back.

There are two plots in *City of Angels*. One is the corruption plot in which the author of a presumably classy private-eye novel—literature in a genre disguise—comes to Hollywood to see his work put on the screen and is seduced by the system, almost losing his integrity and his wife in the process. Distant echoes of Clifford Odets's *The Big Knife*. The other is the private-eye story, told and retold as the producer tones down the original. Example: he removes a fierce speech by the Hispanic detective whose motivation grows out of his outsider's sense of the wrongs done him. A writer who does not know that the seriousness in a novel—private-eye or not—lies in its milieu, its characters, its structure, and not in rhetorical intrusions is in trouble before he gets to Hollywood; the producer is right in this case although his substitution is pure cliché. Both plots are conventional and both are kidded. They are there for the sake of the musical's chief device, the interpenetration of the real (so to speak) and the fictional worlds, which is underlined by having performers (except for Stine and Stone) double in the two stories. At one point, characters from the two worlds—Stein's wife, Stone's secretary—sing a duet ("What You Don't Know about Women"); at another, Randy Graff moves between sets singing "You Can Always Count on Me" in both her roles—Stein's sweetie, Stone's secretary. If there is a thematic point to all this (the unreality of the real?), it is lost in the Pirandellian good clean fun.

Hold on now, wouldn't the point of a musical, even with a Gelbart book, be its music? Cy Coleman has, as usual, written a vigorous score, but with a few exceptions—"Hey, Look Me Over" from *Wildcat*, "If My Friends Could See Me Now" from *Sweet Charity*—I have difficulty remembering Coleman songs, even the ones in *City of Angels*, which I saw only a month before I rolled this sheet of paper into my typewriter. David Zippel goes for tricky lyrics. Rhyming "celibate" with "hell a bit" may not be up to the best Lorenz Hart standard ("when you love your lover, let/blue skies be your coverlet"), but it does indicate the league in which Zippel wants to play. The real difficulty is the Gelbart book. There are funny lines, as one would expect from Gelbart, but for the most part, when the music falls silent, when the reality games are not in action, we are left with familiar Hollywood satire, obvious private-eye parody, and two tedious plots. Dashiell Hammett! Thou shouldst be living at this hour.

Aaron Sorkin's *A Few Good Men,* at the Music Box, Broadway's straight play for this season, may seem an odd partner to *City of Angels,* but *A Few Good Men* is old-fashioned in its own way. It is a courtroom drama in which two marines are the willing scapegoats for the death of a young man, a complainer whose lack of esprit threatens his unit's image. They are defended by Lt. (j. g.) Kaffee, a naval officer whose playful behavior shields him from his late father's reputation as a trial lawyer, one that he suspects he can never approximate. He is his father's son, however; he does save the marines—first persuading them to allow him to save them—with the help of two other officer-lawyers, a dedicated but inexperienced woman, and a Jewish liberal who, seeing the murder as ethnically motivated (the victim is Puerto Rican), at first wants to see the two men found guilty. Kaffee succeeds by letting Lt. Col. Jessep, the unit's Melville-quoting commander, condemn himself on the stand. Here, we are back in *Caine Mutiny* country, although Sorkin spares us Herman Wouk's coda, in which Queeg is praised as America's first line of defense by the lawyer who broke him. The assumption of *A Few Good Men* is that you do not need a slightly demented professional marine to keep us from being overrun by the Cuban hordes (the murder takes place at Guantanamo Bay).

The play is interesting on a what-happens-next basis, but it is essentially as shallow as *City of Angels*, peopled as it is by stereotypes. The production does not help. Tom Hulce is relentlessly cute as Kaffee and Stephen Joyce's Jessep is all physical and verbal tics. Both actors have been highly praised and audiences clearly admire their excesses, but for me they manage only to emphasize the play's weaknesses. Don Scardino's direc-

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tion is particularly annoying. He recently did a commendable job on Jonathan Marco Sherman's *Women and Wallace* on PBS's American Playhouse (January 31) by staging the fragments that make up the play as separate pieces. *A Few Good Men* is similarly constructed, although Sorkin's short scenes, some only a few sentences long, are strung on a clearer narrative line. Presumably in an attempt to keep the production fluid, Scardino bridges between segments by letting the audience see in the half-light the performers assuming new positions and the props being moved to form new settings. The marines, counting cadence, march as they shift tables and chairs, but the rhythm is less than hypnotic. Once, when I was a guest lecturer at West Point, I watched a group of officers carry a table down the hallway, chanting the march of the Wicked Witch's troops from *The Wizard of Oz*. It was a fine theatrical moment, but, then, it happened only once. At *A Few Good Men* I began to think that the military court had set up shop in a moving van.

GERALD WEALES

RELIGIOUS BOOK WEEK

CRITICS' CHOICES

"Religious Books: Critics' Choices" has annually recommended new books in religion. This year we invited our critics to write instead about books, religious or not, that had a surprising or unexpected effect on their religious thought or sensibilities. Going further, we asked film critic, Richard Alleva to do the same for movies. The responses, sometimes surprising, follow.

David Toolan

DAVID TOOLAN, S.J., *is associate editor of* America *magazine.*

First, this delicious, sumptuous, luxuriant book—Barbara Grizzuti Harrison returning to her roots, the source of her sure instincts, tart wit, and utterly catholic mind in *Italian Days* (Weidenfeld & Nicholson, $22.95, 479 pp.). Ever since *Visions of Glory* (Simon & Schuster, 1978), her remarkable account of the culture of Jehovah's Witnesses, we have known that this writer's sensibility is one we would love to travel with. She possesses an enviable ability to interweave sharp description, tough analysis, and gripping personal narrative; and here, in a *bricolage* ramble (meal-by-meal, piazza-by-piazza), she takes us first to Milan, then Venice and Florence, on to Rome (by this time she is in love—with the city—and so are we), and eventually to Naples, and family reunions in the Abruzzi and Calabria. This is not talk *about* God, but direct report of divine excess, superabundant and brimming over, here and now—in the landscape, the pasta, the art and architecture, the carnival of people. A blessing, a feast fit for the Kingdom. Were I instructing a prospective convert and wanted to convey, concretely, the taste of a Catholic sensibility, I would give them this book.

I would also gladly hand them Grace Mojtabai's *Ordinary Time* (Doubleday, $17.95, 223 pp.), for its luminous portrayal of how a Catholic sensibility, in contrast to a fanatic, apocalyptic one, cherishes the present, gives supernatural weight to the pedestrian, honors the most unlikely places—even a greasy spoon in West Texas. And for his understanding of the many sides of the human heart, its cumbersome gestures, its pain and madness, I recommend Richard Bausch's *Mr. Field's Daughter* (Linden/Simon & Schuster, $18.95, 347 pp.), the story of the tangled love—and forgiveness—between an aging father and a grown daughter from Duluth, Minnesota. Bausch's writing, astringent and accurate, performs slow revelation.

For the cultural anthropology of four generations of an Irish-American family in Queens, New York, try Mary Gordon's *The Other Side* (Viking, $19.95, 386 pp.). I have never seen a better case made for the thesis that Freudian analysis does not suffice for those who sin or sacrifice boldly (the grandparents here), but will do nicely for the second and third generations who do not. Or a better reason to hope that our Redeemer, as medieval iconography had it, descends into cold hell. What will happen to the fourth generation of these poor banished children of Eve—well, that's a loose end.

Work is redemptive, I often tell myself. And nothing shows that better than Annie Dillard's wonderfully intelligent *The Writing Life* (Harper and Row, $15.95, 111 pp.). The best part of this vivid, unromantic account of the discipline of her craft is that she could be—and often is—telling you how to haul in a whale, perform surgery, stunt-fly, reach the planet Jupiter, or die well; whatever your trade, this book ought to breathe fresh intensity into it.

On the strength of Robert Imbelli's stunning review (*Commonweal*, November 3, 1989, pp. 596-98), I took on George Steiner's brilliant argument against nihilistic "deconstructionist" critics in *Real Presences* (Chicago, $19.95, 236 pp.). Elegantly written, it is hard going—and definitely worth the effort. It explains to me how it is that art, architecture, and music (and Ms. Harrison would add cooking) can open or, in its failure, close the gate of heaven.

Finally, an explicitly theological book from 1988 that I continue to chew on, Nicholas Lash's ruminations on William James, Schleiermacher, J.H. Newman, and Friedrich von Hügel in *Easter in Ordinary: Reflections on Human Experience and the Knowledge of God* (University Press of

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Virginia, $29.95, 313 pp.). Against the usual blather one hears from too many pulpits, Lash retrieves the experiential meaning of the doctrine of the Trinity.

Elizabeth Beverly

ELIZABETH BEVERLY *is a writer and ethnographer who teaches at Lewis and Clark College in Portland, Oregon.*

A glorious discovery of my childhood lay inside my mother's King James *Bible*, given to her by her Methodist grandmother in 1913. The book was bound in buttery leather which had been ripped along the edge, and from the pages, soft and tough as white peony petals, surged the power of Jesus' bright red speech. What a find! Every utterance was set apart boldly, slightly misaligned with the rest of the black text, but, as far as I knew, straight from God's mouth. What I recognized even then was the thrill of encountering what seems to be authentic speech, intact and potent. Wanting to be heard. Not at all afraid of time.

I cannot think about books without thinking about voices, and many voices are timid these days. Here are three bold books in which the intact voice demands our attention, requires that we consider earnestly the sweet, perpetual human plight: how to care for each other, how to care for the earth.

If we believe Bill McKibben, we shall have to change our lives in order to save them. *The End of Nature* (Random House, $19.95, 226 pp.) is not simply about global warming, although the text efficiently documents current theories concerning the greenhouse effect. Nor is it an indictment of science run amok, although McKibben fears the implications of genetic engineering. This extended personal essay is a rational yet ardent invitation to think morally about our highly industrialized lives. McKibben asks us to recognize the inherent value of the natural world we have already ravaged. He argues simply that the time has come for us to "*choose* to remain God's creatures instead of making ourselves gods." Not only is such a choice morally correct; our willingness to limit our desires, to quell our arrogance, is the only way to offer our grandchildren any life at all.

McKibben is not afraid to discuss humankind's urge to dominate and control. When I first opened *Six Women's Slave Narratives*, edited by William L. Andrews, one volume in a remarkable series—The Schomburg Library of Nineteenth-Century Black Women Writers—published by Oxford University Press ($19.95, paper, 384 pp.), I feared the certain plunge into lives darkened by such domination. But what a surprise! These voices, willing to report what it feels like to be owned, to be used as property, cast great light and hope. The lives are dreadful, but the capacity to speak is transforming.

Consider Old Elizabeth. Born and raised a slave, as a child she is ripped away from her family. Her sorrow almost overwhelms her. But she meets God outside the hierarchy of human assumptions. To hear her speak of God's grace renews faith in faith itself. The story of her slavery does not interest Elizabeth nearly so much as the story of her longing to bear witness to God, to preach his word, to feel his light and liveliness. Who of us has heard Elizabeth before? Now we can open this book and feel her breath: an elderly, black, ex-slave woman reliving "many glorious meetings, (when) the Lord poured out his Spirit in sweet effusions."

The immediacy of such a voice demands effort from a reader. At the least we are urged to care for someone whose hopes or opinions we may not readily like or share. Mario Vargas Llosa is a novelist who is running for president of Peru. *The Storyteller* (Farrar Straus Giroux, $17.95, 246 pp.), his most recent novel, suggests that without an intact voice to tell a people how they live, how they *have* lived, how they *might* live, moral survival is impossible. The voice is nothing less than cultural memory. Vargas Llosa's novel cares about the earth itself in the way McKibben does; humankind's intentions are paltry compared to those of the gods. And the plural gods are important because Vargas Llosa casts his novel partly as a chronicle of the Machiguenga, a traditional people whose

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lives have been utterly changed by their contact with the "civilizing" world. This novel raises awkward questions about the meaning of the "good life," about the zeal of just belief, about the righteousness of Christianity.

These books attest to the power of the necessary and disturbing voice. Unafraid of time. Wanting to be heard.

with Day present new material in which she reminds us we are all outsiders in this long loneliness of life. Her radical devotion to the church is in stark contrast with her recognition of its uneven fabric. No matter, she refused to criticize the contradiction of political power within the church. The claim to the church, she said, belongs not "only to officials and bureaucrats," but to every strand of life within it. As well as we manage, so well does the church progress. The task of life, she tells us, is "to live in such a way that one's life would not make sense if God did not exist."

Whatever we successfully live in relation to—and we measure our success by the way in which we define it—we must find that relation in solitude. Stephen

Phyllis Zagano

PHYLLIS ZAGANO *is an associate professor at the Boston University College of Communication. Her books include* Religion and Public Policy *(The Rockford Institute).*

I am sure I learned to pray on planes. The education done a traveler is the recognition that while we don't really exist in relation to this world, we very surely learn who we are in living relatively. So sometimes the books we read while traveling greet us so deeply we are compelled to give them to our friends.

John Kennedy Toole's *The Neon Bible* (Grove Press, $15.95, 162 pp.) is one. Toole's comedic novel, *A Confederacy of Dunces*, earned him a posthumous Pulitzer Prize in 1981, twelve years after his suicide at thirty-two. The tortured history of the manuscript of *The Neon Bible* from his death until its publication is as careful a comment on the role of money in human relations as one will ever need. The book is about righteousness and wealth. Young David, the narrator, views his small Southern world from a poor porch on a poor hill. Each night he sees the neon Bible light the sky, its bright blue cross belying the attitude of the church members who shun him and his family. It is church dues and Sunday morality that separate David and that community. The story, which in many ways is the same old story, reorders once again the definitions of community and of church, and who stands where.

Perhaps none has lived this notion quite so publicly as Dorothy Day, who is reintroduced to those who know her by Robert Coles in *Dorothy Day: A Radical Devotion* (Addison-Wesley, $17.95, $8.95 paper, 182 pp.). Coles's tape-recorded conversations

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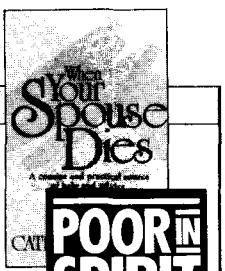

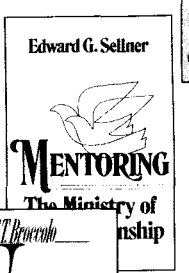

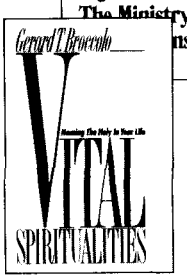

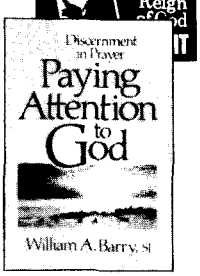

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Mitchell's translation of Rainer Maria Rilke's *Letters to a Young Poet* (Random House, $14.95, $6.95 paper, 109 pp.), is newly available in paperback. Rilke tells his young friend to "look upon it all as a child would..." and not fear losing God: "Do you suppose that someone who really has him could lose him like a little stone?" It is through human love that it all eventually makes sense: "And this more human love...consists in this: that two solitudes protect and border and greet each other." Such is the beginning of "church."

"We all ought to be as effective as we can," Dorothy Day said. We always want to believe that someone else is in charge. No one else is in charge. We are.

Gerard S. Sloyan

REV. GERARD S. SLOYAN *is a professor of religion at Temple University. His most recent book is* Jesus, Redeemer and Divine Word *(Michael Glazier).*

In the spring of the year, the time when kings go forth to battle, David besieged Rabbah of the Ammonites. Modern Jews, to the contrary, wage the peace of Pesach in the spring and Christians the peace of the resurrected Christ. In both historical cases calm followed on death and destruction, a peace not of human making.

Waning winter and struggling spring are times to reflect on whether peace in nature is to have an answering echo in the family of peoples or the human heart. For Christians, *A Triduum Sourcebook*, ed. Gabe Huck and Mary Ann Simcoe (Liturgy Training Publications, $12.95, 168 pp.), may help. It is a rich resource to assist in praying the three days of the Paschal Feast (a noun in the singular). Like it in drawing on age-old texts of public prayer and spiritual wisdom is the more recent, *An Easter Sourcebook: The Fifty Days*, ed. Gabe Huck, Gail Ramshaw, Gordon Lathrop, Barbara Schmich (Liturgy Training Publications, $12.95, 173 pp.). These anthologies are well-culled collections that cannot wilt.

Now available in paperback is Michael Wyschogrod's thoughtful book, *The Body of Faith: God in the People Israel* (Harper and Row, $14.95, 265 pp.). The volume in its entirety may not be for everybody. Its author is an academic philosopher who knows the tensions between the intelligence of the storytelling Jew and the reason that originated with the pagan, often the religious, Greek. Wyschogrod knows well the path of the rabbis interpreting laws of Jewish behavior while not examining God too carefully, and of the kabbalists indulging in a perhaps too great familiarity with deity. He opts for the middle ground of biblical Judaism without rejecting the contributions of the other two. The rationalism of Maimonides he does reject. Christians who live a sacramental life may find Wyschogrod's observations lacking in understanding of it but never in respect. Jew, Christian, and agnostic can find here deep reflection on a great religious and ethnic tradition—including why some notable rejecters of it like Spinoza, Freud, and Marx cannot be understood apart from it.

A serious book now in a fourth printing is the historical inquiry into why Jesus was sentenced to death by Roman authority, E.P. Sanders's *Jesus and Judaism* (Fortress, $10.95, 444 pp.). This American scholar finds the teachings of Jesus, difficult as they are to identify exactly, no cause for his condemnation. Sufficient, however, would be the claim tantamount to kingship embedded in his Jewish restoration eschatology and his promise of a new or renewed temple. From these claims the community called church developed logically. Unlike Sanders's understanding that the Gospels tell of an other-worldly kingdom is that of Richard A. Horsley in *Jesus and the Spiral of Violence* (Harper and Row, $22.95, 355 pp.). He sees Jesus' parables and gnomic sayings in their call to justice as corresponding to the aspirations of an oppressed proletariat. In his reconstruction the temple priesthood was the agency that imposed a foreign yoke, more economic than political. Jesus' teaching, thoroughly this-worldly, challenged it.

Sometimes with, sometimes without religious reference, *A Sourcebook about Christian Death*, ed. Virginia Sloyan, art by Linda Ekstrom (Liturgy Training Publications, $12.95, 160 pp.), is a collection of terrible beauty and sober reality on the end of all seasons for all.

Carl Mitcham

CARL MITCHAM *teaches in the philosophy department at Pennslyvania State University. His most recent book is* Ethical Issues Associated with Scientific and Technological Research for the Military *(New York Academy of Sciences).*

The decay of Communist totalitarianism confronts the historically sensitive Christian in the West with at least two challenges.

First, the internal decay of totalitarianism challenges the widely accepted justification of World War II. Even among many sympathetic to pacifism, warfare seemed necessary in the face of the overwhelming evil of Hitler. But is it not possible that Nazi Germany, too, would have decayed internally, at less cost than on the battlefields? Paul Fussell's *Wartime: Understanding and Behavior in the Second World War* (Oxford, $19.95, 330 pp.), an examination of what the war did to us, the winners, in the very midst of our winning, suggests that Dorothy Day's "naive pacifism" may not have been so naive.

Second, what of our own internal decay? In *Sollicitudo rei socialis* (United States Catholic Conference, $3.95, 104 pp.) John Paul II criticizes the East for its lack of democracy and the West for its consumerism. With the apparent desire on the part of the socialist-block countries to imitate capitalist-consumer countries, now there is an even greater need to assess consumerism as a spiritual problem.

Colin Campbell's *The Romantic Ethic and the Spirit of Modern Consumerism* (Basil Blackwell, $16.95, paper, 301 pp.) provides necessary orientation for this task. According to Weber's classic study of *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, the decisive revolution that constitutes modernity is the legitimation of capitalist accumulation and increased material production by Protestant spirituality. But, argues Campbell, without a corresponding revolution in attitudes toward consumption, greater production would be wholly counterproductive.

The definitive character of modern con-

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sumerism is not, however, simply increased consumption legitimated by a romantic ethic that promotes feeling and autonomous, imaginative pleasure. It is also characterized by a new kind of consumable, what Albert Borgmann in *Technology and the Character of Contemporary Life*, (University of Chicago Press, $14.95 paper, 302 pp.) calls "devices." Unlike traditional "things," worldly particularities that call forth human engagement, devices embody little particularity and require minimal human knowledge or skill. All modern consumer products, from plastic-encased electronic toys to precooked fast food, tend to reflect the device paradigm. In their very lack of character, devices facilitate the projection of romantically advertised sexuality and self-aggrandizement.

The consumerist-influenced lives people lead in the West is also the implicit theme of a remarkable second novel by Valerie Sayers. Her *How I Got Him Back* (Doubleday, $17.95, 300 pp.), narrates the interwoven stories of three couples whipped about by the romantic ethic of love and the attempt to consume one another and the world in search of one's own imagined pleasure.

Each of these volumes—the last two by new Catholic writers—deepen our perspectives on a major spiritual challenge. Politically, the fall of communism may be a challenge to help them become more like us. Spiritually, it is to help them not become too much like us.

Joan Sexton

JOAN SEXTON *does work in spiritual direction, is a volunteer for People with AIDS, and cofounder of Another Voice, an organization committed to women's rights in the Catholic church.*

I have a friend with a strong bias against small books. "Can't be much there, or it would be bigger." I thought of him when I realized the books that have touched me most recently are all small, all in paperback, and all under ten dollars. Perhaps the path to my spiritual center has narrowed so that brief, bright, intense insights throw great light and help dissipate the growing cloud of despair that creeps in as violence, cruelty, and suffering erupt in our city. For me, the common effect of these readings has been one of hope returning, reversal that illuminates the disturbing reality with something new, different, fresh....as if, as the Zen koan says: "The sun rises in the West."

An assortment of poetry readings, interviews, and an article, all by the poet Robert Bly in *A Little Book on the Human Shadow* (Harper & Row, $8.95, 81 pp.), offers fresh and provocative reflection on the Jungian concept of shadow and projection, done with the poet's magic and wisdom. The danger lurking when the black bag of repressed pieces of ourselves never gets unpacked can be dissipated by unpacking the bag, reclaiming the energies we've projected onto others, and welcoming our darker side home. Imagination, activity, articulation, creating "the rope of language" is a way out. "No one can be a Christian who is not an artist," Blake's view, adapted by Bly...good stuff.

A lovely discovery has been the poetry of Kabir, fifteenth-century Indian, son of a Moslem weaver in Benares, influenced by Sufi mysticism. Again Bly enters. His translation is strong, blunt, spare and, for

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me, empowers mystical images with everyday words. "You have slept for millions and millions of years. Why not wake up this morning?" (11 of *The Kabir Book: Forty-four Ecstatic Poems of Kabir*, Beacon Press, $6.95, 71 pp.).

Originally given as the Madeleva Lecture in Spirituality at St. Mary's College, Notre Dame, *Women and the Word* by Sandra Schneiders, I.H.M. (Paulist Press, $3.50, 81 pp.), is a gem of clarity, scholarship, and imagination. It is directed to the grave problem of the patriarchal insistence on the maleness of God, which uses the human sex of the male Jesus to set in place the attribute of maleness for God. Schneiders describes this view as theological heresy, for the church has held with Gregory of Nazianzus that "the terms 'Father' and 'Son,' as applied to the persons of the Trinity, were not names of natures or essences but of relations and even in this case the terms are used metaphorically." Schneiders's clarification of Jesus of the Gospels and Pauline literature as the incarnation of the feminine Old Testament hypothesis of God, Holy Wisdom or Sophia, is brilliant. By filling in a missing piece in my theology, she restores hope that the feminine divine energies repressed by the patriarchal church will break through as women experience our self-image as healed and whole and an honored part of the Body of Christ. The notes and bibliography are a treasure.

The nitty-gritty of struggling to put the love of Jesus into action and relieving the suffering of our companions is addressed in *How Can I Help? Stories and Reflections on Service* by Ram Dass and Paul Gorman (Alfred A. Knopf, $6.95, 243 pp.). Being brought up as a stubborn daughter of Our Lady of Perpetual Responsibility, I struggle more than ever with this "timeless inquiry of the heart." The feeling of helplessness is authentic but not final. These personal experiences, all verbatim, are honest and compelling, from both sides of the helping situation. Interspersed is the wisdom of the two authors, gently stated, lovingly offered. A sample: "Catering to our own needs and expectations, we may be less likely to hear what others really feel they really need. We may be willing to give, but our self-image has its terms." I can see I have been caught in what they call the "helping prison." This book eases my way out.

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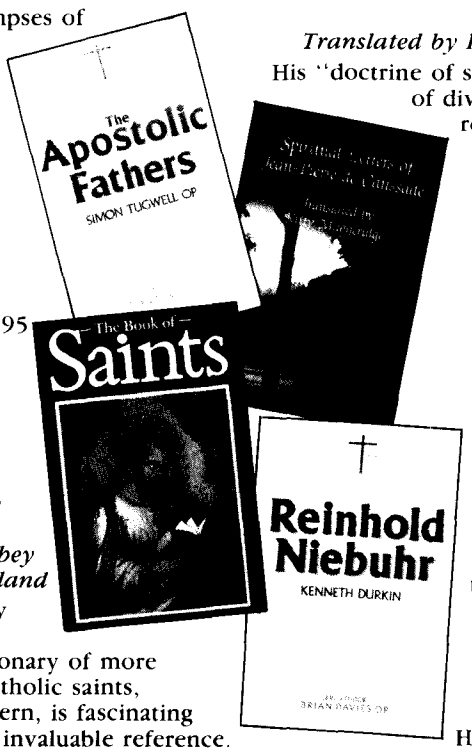

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Gertrud Mueller Nelson

GERTRUD MUELLER NELSON *is an author, artist, and lecturer. Her works include* To Dance with God (*Paulist*), Clip-Art for Feasts and Seasons, *and* Clip-Art for Celebrations and Service *(both Pueblo).*

I have chosen books on vastly differing subjects and style, convinced that thoughtful readers will integrate their messages and be especially pleased for a few great finds, some of them hidden among offbeat publishers.

It may happen that in the 1990s we will come to recognize that we are headed into an environmental catastrophe. "Movements" may have helped change our words, but we have yet to change our lives. We continue to rob nature and fail to consider the lilies of the field. While ultimately

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the solutions may be global, they begin as private and small, local and personal. At least that is the only way we can begin to chip away at the charge we received in Genesis, to dress and keep this earth.

To that end I have been feeding myself and gleaning courage from the blooming genre of nature writing where I am pulled down to earth and wooed into change. Daniel Halpern edits a fat collection of essays on landscape and natural history (*On Nature*, North Point Press, $9.95, 317 pp.), which I mention for the sheer beauty of its writing. The book can serve as an introduction to twenty-five nature writers (among them Annie Dillard, Gretel Ehrlich, Barry Lopez, Leslie Marmon Silko) and to those books which they, in turn, love and share in a lengthy annotated bibliography. In these essays we know nature to be the place we live out our lives, the ground of our being, the container of our spirits.

Until now, many scientists have assumed that violence is more natural to humankind than the making of peace. But Frans De Waal (*Peacemaking among Primates*, Harvard, $29.95, 294 pp), takes us to visit colonies of our bestial brothers and sisters, the chimpanzees, to observe their patterns of reconciling conflicts. These primates demonstrate highly developed strategies for consolation and reconciliation which are part of our very biological heritage. In this graceful and thoroughly engaging book, De Waal uses political and contemporary human issues to make his point that peacemaking is not only desirable, but required for our human survival and evolution.

A Catholic writer, already appreciated in international literary circles but yet to be discovered in Catholic periodicals, is Fanny Howe. This is a poet to be reckoned with. She writes about the meaning of experience and the acceptance of mystery in the context of her Catholic religion. Of her many, slender, rich novels, *Lives of a Spirit* (Sun and Moon, $10.95, 74 pp.), is perhaps the one that best tells her commitment to standing open and alert in a state-of-heart that finds God's mystery as it corners us and then liberates the spirit. "And it's only when you lie down defeated and dream that you experience a love that is frosted with hot lighting and colors, shapes, and textures so transparent they are apparitions of perfection. In dreams you see through solids! It's Papa's way of showing you how to know G-d: with all your parts abandoned, cast down, while your spirit is free to move about." Her mysticism has about it a gnostic sensibility.

Two more hard-to-find books are Allen B. Chinen's *In the Ever After: Fairy Tales and the Second Half of Life* (Chiron, $12.95, 203 pp.), and Judith Stoughton's *Proud Donkey of Schaerbeek: Ade Bethune, Catholic Worker Artist* (North Star Press of St. Cloud, $19.95, 144 pp.). Chinen's book, despite its unattractive format, is a gift to the aging. As America "greys" we need all the help we can get to discover the final stages of our becoming whole. Chinen offers fairy tales from around the world but with elderly protagonists: those who have already fought the good fight, who have grown up but now need to grow old and wise and spiritually mature. Living "happily ever after" is the dream of youth. Around midlife, having arrived in that "ever after," one is shocked

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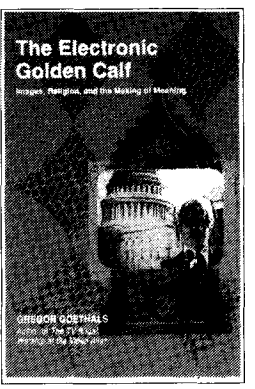

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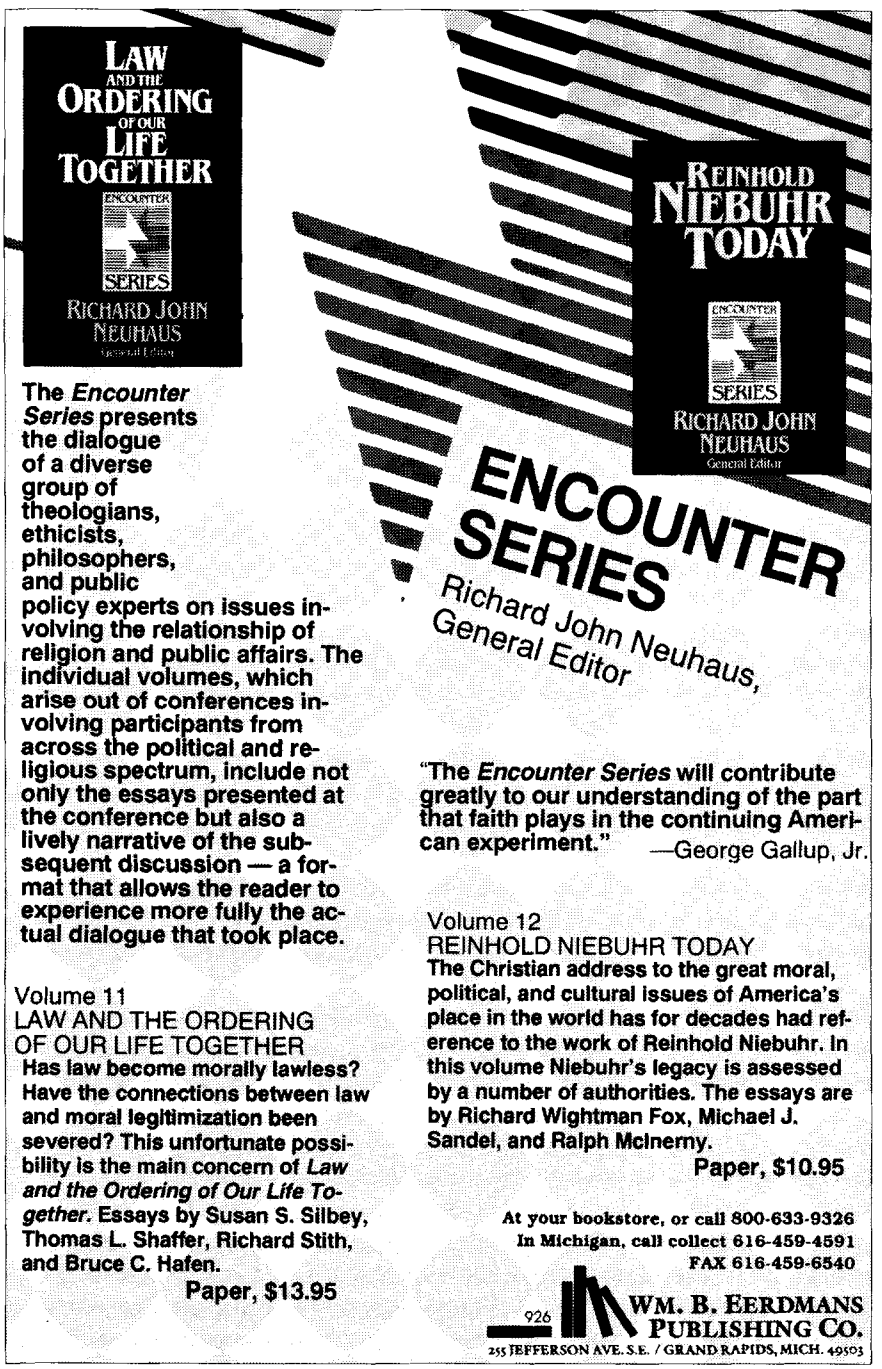
to discover a whole new progression of developmental stages to be navigated. These heroes and heroines reflect the nature of old age, prescribe solutions, and offer meaning to our ever extended survival. Chinen cracks open each tale with wisdom, humor, compassion, and an astonishing imagination. This is a book for anyone planning to grow old and for all those already there who'd like to ponder and share these insights together with their peers.

Judith Stoughton's sensitive biography of Ade Bethune is an important tribute and a visual triumph published by a small press. Those who want to meet a woman—important for her pioneering contributions in the field of sacred art and architecture—as artist, writer, and liturgical consultant, will feel richly rewarded and certainly enlightened. The book is bursting with family pictures but also with those strong, timeless woodcuts for which Ade Bethune is best known. Dorothy Day had been her mentor from an early age, and over the years Ade has continued to create hundreds of illustrations for the *Catholic Worker*.

The book is important documentation of early, lay, womanly involvement in the liturgical movement that was precursor to Vatican II. In those days liturgy was less the "specialty" it is today, separate from social concern. Ade Bethune proclaimed the Gospel in her simple pictures, where the people of God tend and care for one another in humble daily acts of love. The ordinary is portrayed with strength and wit, with strong, unsentimental faith that renders work holy and the ordinary extraordinary. Says Judith Stoughton with regard to the vigor of those pre-Vatican II days, "We thought that the problems of sentimentality and inappropriateness in liturgical art and music had been exposed and were on the way to being healed. The scene today proves us wrong." Indeed, the junky religious hardware that is madly proliferating again and being sold without a tweak of conscience to unwary catechists at Catholic conventions makes me urge readers to take up Ade Bethune's mission to tell the gospel truth, boldly, lovingly, and strongly.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Joseph Grange

JOSEPH GRANGE *is a professor of philosophy at the University of Southern Maine, Portland, Maine. He writes on the philosophy of culture, environmental ethics, metaphysics, and the philosophy of religion.*

When winter settles down on the North Country, elemental perspectives drive themselves into your brain: Endurance, the ice, stability, the wish for change, warmth, life, stillness and activity, creativity and its creator. These great generalities loom forth with a force all their own suppressing florid and irrelevant detail. They turn us toward those metaphysical issues that deconstruction and other postmodern fads have made so unfashionable. I mean truth, value, spontaneity, and permanence. Three recent books provide an opportunity to redirect our thinking about these issues of ultimate importance.

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In *Recovery of the Measure* (State University of New York Press, $21.95, 432 pp.) Robert Neville argues against the relativism of the day, employing a process of normative thinking that has its roots in Plato, its interpretive tools in American philosophy, and its practical impact in real life. Condemning the effete quality of much present-day European hermeneutics, Neville sees truth as the carry-over of value and therefore actually present in the concrete world. Against Derida, Rorty, and others who see the world as a text we interpret, Neville demonstrates that the world itself is the measure of our interpretations. Real joy, real tragedy, real effort, and real success await our participation in its processes. Metaphysics is a type of common sense that derives its critical power from the truth of the normative measures it uncovers in the universe.

Where Neville is at pains to stress the importance of stable and enduring structures for the recovery of a robust philosophy of nature, David Hall and Roger Ames in *Thinking through Confucius* (State University of New York Press, $16.95, 320 pp.) provide a revolutionary portrait of the Chinese sage—one that subverts the traditional idea of Confucius as the upholder of the status quo. Instead we are given a thinker whose major aim in the evocation of intensities. Ritual action (*li*) and signification (*yi*) are entwined creative moments that combine the revered achievements of the past with the demands of the spontaneous moment. To be fully human is to know what is different about each situation and what to do about it. Life is no crusty formularized court liturgy. It is all about achieving the appropriate harmony of past and present, permanence and change. The human duty is to achieve personhood in a social world that depends upon a sense of tact, beauty, and deference for its survival. A human being must become a real person; one is not born that way.

Christian social responsibility in the twentieth century is the central topic of Richardo Planas's *Liberation Theology* (Sheed & Ward, $12.95, 289 pp.). This is a reflective, thoroughly researched defense of a controversial movement. It shows the charges hurled at liberation theology, charges of atheism and communism, for what they are—red herrings of the smelliest sort. Faith is in need of praxis, and the plight of the poor in Latin America is the place for concrete social action. Denial of this concrete fact is eschatological escapism.

As expressions of perspectives that grant importance to ultimate issues, these fine books evoke the promise of winter's spring.

Richard Alleva

RICHARD ALLEVA *is the film reviewer for* Crisis *magazine.*

If we're not moved spiritually by a well-made, emotional movie, it's not necessarily because it makes us feel nothing. It's just that we may be moved by it in every way but a spiritual one: sensually, viscerally, hysterically, and above all sentimentally. If you find yourself weeping at a movie, believe me, you are not having a spiritual experience. What you are having is a bloody good cry, and, once the movie and the tears have stopped, you may proceed with life exactly as you lived it before. South American torturers probably have a good cry at *E.T.* before getting back to work with the electric prods. Come to think of it, *E.T.* is an electric prod. (It had me blubbering away, anyway.)

If a movie touches us spiritually, it does to us what the mutilated statue of Apollo did to Rilke: it looks into us as we look at it. And we must change our lives. To name merely three films that have done that to me, I have to look back over the past decade rather than the past year.

Tender Mercies, written by Horton Foote and directed by Bruce Beresford, certainly lives up to its title by affirming the mercy of God's love and the power of human love as a conduit for this divine charity. After a drunken slide, country singer Mac Sledge (Robert Duvall) finds a new place in life for himself when he weds a compassionate fundamentalist Baptist. Yet there is a stern, almost sinister, aspect to this movie. God may give and forgive but God sure knows how to take away, too. After Mac gains a new home and a new handle on his artistic career, his teen-aged daughter (from a previous marriage) dies in a car accident.

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The Board of Regents of Seton Hall University invites nominations and applications for the position of Chancellor and Chief Executive Officer of Seton Hall University. As mandated by the University By-Laws, the Chancellor must be a Roman Catholic priest. To this end, the Board of Regents is looking for an individual who understands the needs and direction of higher education, its economic underpinnings and social impact, and the special character and mission of a Catholic institution of higher learning.

Seton Hall University was founded in 1856 as the first diocesan college in the United States and was organized as a University in 1950. It is located in suburban South Orange, New Jersey, on a 58 acre campus, 14 miles from Manhattan. The University consists of eight schools; College of Arts and Sciences; W. Paul Stillman School of Business; College of Nursing; College of Education and Human Services; University College; School of Graduate Medical Education; Immaculate Conception School of Theology; and the School of Law, which is located in Newark and ranks twelth in size among the nation's law schools. Last fall there were 4,425 full time undergraduate students and a total of 7,118 FTE's, enrolled in over 80 degree programs, evenly divided among graduate and undergraduate programs, including a Ph.D. in Chemistry and Counseling Psychology. The full time faculty numbers 360.

The University governance is entrusted to a 27-member Board of Regents, which elects its own chairperson, and a 13-member Board of Trustees, whose president is the Archbishop of Newark, and whose role is to safeguard and enhance the Catholic character of the institution.

In the course of the last seven years, the University has engaged in a major construction program, which has included a recreation center and three residence halls as well as a $36 million law center, the last project to be completed by September 1991. A $100 million capital campaign is in an advanced stage of preparation, and several major gifts, including one of $10 million, have been received. In more recent years there have been significant improvements in the academic quality of applicants to undergraduate and graduate programs. The University houses the New Jersey Institute for Collegiate Teaching and Learning and is the beneficiary through the Henry Luce Foundation of a major bequest in support of the education of women in the sciences. The University is also the recipient of a $2 million Governor's Challenge Grant to restructure the general education curriculum and create a Human Relations Institute.

To reaffirm Seton Hall's position as a major Catholic University, the Board of Regents is particularly interested in a candidate with wide experience in Catholic higher education; a record of success in securing external funding for academic purposes; an understanding of the complex role of the University as a multicultural learning center, and the vision to lead a comprehensive University situated in a metropolitan region into the 21st century.

Nominations and applications are requested by March 16, 1990 and should be sent to: **Dr. A. Zachary Yamba, Chair, Chancellor Search Committee, Seton Hall University, Presidents Hall, 400 South Orange Avenue, South Orange, New Jersey 07079.** Seton Hall University is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity employer m/f.

Seton Hall University

COMING

The price of truth in El Salvador: Ignacio Martin-Baro on reparations, Ricardo Urioste on Oscar Romero.

Before her death, Mac had maintained a certain distance from this beloved daughter because he was unwilling to look back on a life that included much of which he was ashamed. Now she is dead and the best part of his past is gone. To quote from an article I wrote for *Crisis* magazine: Foote "affirms the unending menace of being alive in this world. God may love us but God's earth doesn't. Not looking back doesn't stop lightning from striking on the path ahead."

Each time I see this great movie, I want to do the impossible: to embrace life and yet be willing to let it go without a regret. I want to be a sober bacchant.

Shoah evoked the horrors of the Holocaust not through the usual assemblage of documentary clips but with new footage of the places where horrors occurred and interviews with the people who survived. Both the locales and the interviewees are quite clearly haunted. *Shoah* raises ghosts that we should all confront.

An infinitely lighter film, *Turtle Diary* (scripted by Harold Pinter from a book by Russell Hoban and directed by John Irving), lovingly observes the banality of everyday life even as the leading characters, played by Ben Kingsley and Glenda Jackson, try to undermine that banality by performing the small, compassionate rebellion of releasing some turtles from the torpidity of a zoo into the wildness of the ocean. Each frame of *Turtle Diary*, each gesture of its performers, is placid yet incipient. It's a celebration of the unpredictability of people who are supposed to be buttoned-down, desiccated, finished. *Turtle Diary* is a bracing reprimand for any occasion when you've looked into a plain-as-pudding face, mentally yawned, and decided, "Well, I guess I know what he's all about."

All three of these movies have something in common: though visually commanding, they scrape away at the visible world. They show us a lot of life while constantly hinting that only what cannot be seen can touch our spirits deeply. □

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The human & the holy

Lawrence S. Cunningham

Heiko Oberman, emeritus of Tübingen and Harvard, has been the preeminent Reformation scholar of this generation. It was Oberman who forced Catholic scholars to look again at what once was considered the "decadence" of late scholasticism and Protestant scholars to admit the deep medieval and "catholic" character of Luther's theology. This study of Luther, then, comes from the pen of a historian who knows the period with an intimacy that allows him to make discriminations and judgments which would seem apodictic in a person less in control of the sources.

The subtitle of Oberman's book is not there for rhetorical flourish; rather, it sums up the biographer's thesis. This complex study operates with two basic assumptions: Luther was a late medieval man who saw his own life as a titantic battle, waged with ferocity on every plane of earthly existence, between the power of God and the power of Satan; and, secondly, any desire (a post-Enlightenment temptation) to tidy up Luther by downplaying that struggle clouds, rather than aids, our understanding of the man and the movement he triggered. This work has no patience with theories about Luther as the first modern man or the herald of the doctrine of individual conscience or the other pieties advanced by his less critical admirers; and it is equally impatient with reductionist readings, whether they be of the polemical (e.g. Denfle) or psychoanalytical variety (Erikson). Nor is this a biography in the narrow construction of the term; it is an interpretation of a life and a mind.

Luther: Man Between God and the Devil, *by Heiko A. Oberman, translated by Eileen Walliser-Schwartzbart, Yale University Press, $29.95, 380 pp.*

What Oberman does provide is a brilliant account of Luther's evolution as a man, a thinker, and a Christian, written with a learned sympathy that permits the author to look at the "dark" Luther (his depressions; his scatological vulgarity; his emotional violence; his anti-Semitism) with neither evasion or gloss. I found this one of the most satisfying books in the area of historical theology/biography that I have read in a long time. Every person interested in Christianity should put this on his or her reading list. The German original won a prize for the best historical writing done in Germany between 1975-85 and, on reading the work, one sees why.

Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179) is one of those extraordinary twelfth-century women that has led the historian Friedrich Heer, using a phrase of Hildegard herself, to call the period the *tempus muliebre*—the women's century. There is an enormous interest, fueled in part by the efforts of the feminist scholars to retrieve women's history, in Hildegard who, by the standard of any age, was an extraordinary person. She wrote learned treatises on theology, natural science, medicine, and bibical exegesis. She was an illustrator of her work; a composer who wrote both songs and musical drama complete with music; carried on a correspondence with everyone from the pope to her contemporary, Saint Bernard of Clairvaux; and—unheard of then (and only done *sub rosa* now)—went on at least four preaching missions which included audiences both religious and lay. Barbara Newman's excellent study of her thought (*Sister of Wisdom*, 1983) has argued, persuasively, that she is in the tradition of wisdom or sapiential theology to which she made an important and original contribution. Flanagan's study is less thematic than that of Newman but it is a worthy addition to what I hope will be a growing interest in this medieval polymath.

Hildegard of Bingen: A Visionary Life, *by Sabina Flanagan, Routledge, $29.95, 230 pp.*

Sabina Flanagan's book would be the one that I would recommend as a first introduction to Hildegard. She knows Hildegard's writings well, places them in chronological order (and summarizes them economically) as well as their cultural context, and, in the process, fleshes out Hildegard's life and times. A final chapter, by no means reductionistic, speculates about the relationship of Hildegard's visions (it was her prophetic visions that undergirded her authority to write and preach) and the physical phenomenon of migraine. That chapter, like the book itself, is balanced and judicial. Flanagan introduced her work with the hope that it would provide a "comprehensive introduction"

LAWRENCE S. CUNNINGHAM *is a professor of theology at the University of Norte Dame. His most recent book, from Crossroad, is* Catholic Prayer.

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to Hildegard. I think she has every reason to feel that she has done precisely that.

The title *Women Mystics in Medieval Europe* is a bit misleading since this book, part study and part anthology, concentrates, in fact, on five women who all lived in Northern Europe in that *tempus muliebre* to which we alluded above. They are Hildegard of Bingen, Mechthild of Magdeburg, Beatrice of Nazareth, Hadewijch of Antwerp, and Marguerite Porete. The authors (they are French scholars) first provide a general essay on the women, their milieu, spiritual doctrine, and influence. Then each author is introduced in the same fashion along with a very lean selection of an original text or portion thereof. The final bibliography is weighted heavily to European sources. In general, this is a very uneven work: a bit too compressed and advanced for the beginner and a bit too hurried for the more knowledgeable.

The greatest value of this book derives from the authors' conviction that these women contributed a new kind of theology in which the primacy of love over intellect was a salient characteristic. This, of course, was not original with them since it was the hallmark of Cistercian spirituality in the twelfth century, as it would be of Franciscan spirituality in the thirteenth. What they did provide was a passionate vocabulary and a range of images and metaphors which enriched the mystical vocabulary. Their influence was not marginal but only recently recognized. Marguerite Porete (who died at the stake in Paris as an unrepentant heretic) wrote *Mirror of Simple Souls* which, despite the suspect reputation of the author, spread to various places in various guises. One scholar has speculated that her work may have been of importance for the illuministic mysticism of the seventeenth-century Quakers in England. Similarly, mystics of the reputation of Ruysbroeck and Meister Eckhart were influenced by their contacts with these women who transformed the troubadour and minnesinger tradition of courtly love into deeply felt and beautifully formulated expressions of mysticism.

Women Mystics in Medieval Europe, *by Emile Zum Brunn & George Epiney-Burgard, translated by Shelia Hughes, Paragon House, $24.95, 233 pp.*

Simone Weil is one of those extraordinary souls, like Pascal and Kierkegaard, whose life is more to be wondered at than emulated. A member of that admirable band of intellectuals and spiritual seekers who gave witness to the truth during some of the darkest decades (one thinks also of Silone, Koestler, Orwell, and Camus), Weil was a brilliant essayist, a religious mystic, an eccentric but powerful political

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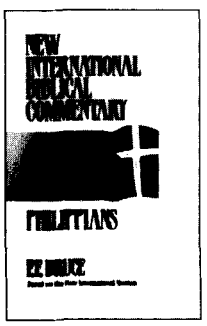

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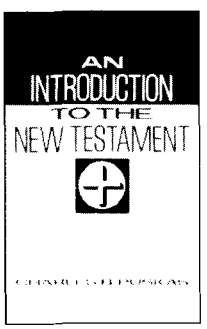

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thinker, and, above all, a strangely ferocious personality that could even intimidate formidable personages like Leon Trotsky and Simone de Beauvoir. Her desire to combine the intellectual life with a commitment to the working class of France as well as her thirst for asceticism and single-minded drive for truth have been recounted in well received biographies by Jacques Cabaud and her one-time classmate, Simone Petrement. Indeed, books about Weil appear at a steady rate as my now somewhat crowded bookshelf of Weiliana demonstrates.

Fiori's biography, first published in Italian, is, nonetheless, welcome because of the extensive oral histories the author gathered from those who knew Weil, both in France and, during her years of exile from Vichy and Nazi anti-Semitism, in the United States and England. Indeed, for those who know something about her life, Fiori's extensive notes about her old friends and colleagues are almost as interesting as the text itself. For that reason alone this is a valuable study which adds much to what we have learned from the well received biography of Petrement. Fiori is also good as a summarizer of Weil's thought, which she does thematically in ample chapters on Weil's intellectual development. The translator, alas, has only given us half a loaf. He gives no indication, either by way of any bibliography or in Fiori's ample notes, that Weil's books (and books about her) are available in English, nor does he bother to give English references for other works used in his study that are also available in translation. A first-time reader of Weil's life would have no idea that most of this extraordinary woman's writings have been accessible in English for well over a generation and others have recently appeared in translation with more promised.

Simone Weil: An Intellectual Biography, *by Gabriella Fiori, translated by Joseph R. Berrigan, University of Georgia Press, $35, 380 pp.*

Peter Winch's study is definitely not a work to read as a first introduction to Simone Weil. It is a closely argued monograph devoted to some of her fundamental philosophical ideas written by a philosopher for those who know some philosophy and/or have a taste for its austerities. It is a work that I read with close attention (there is no other way to read it) and, from that reading, learned a good deal about Simone Weil. Essentially, Winch argues that a detailed examination of Weil's early philosophical writing (especially her thesis on Descartes which now, happily, is available in English in *Formative Writings: 1929-1941*) is a key to understanding Weil's later thought (which is, as Winch shows, a lot more carefully structured than a first acquaintance with her writings, especially the notebooks, might suggest) and the difficulties that she encountered intellectually as she attempted to be faithful

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to her original insights. What was a revelation to me was how, not infrequently, her thinking was close to that of her contemporary, Ludwig Wittgenstein, who was also, though Winch makes little of it,

Simone Weil: The Just Balance, *by Peter Winch, Cambridge University Press, $44.50, 234 pp.*

another tortured spiritual seeker. Winch's book is tightly argued but spends little time on Weil as a mystic, although, as he rightly points out, it is often very difficult to draw the line between Weil as philosopher and Weil as a religious thinker. Students of Weil will also be much consoled to know that a paperback edition of this outrageously costly volume is available for $14.95. It is worth having.

Abraham Heschel (1907-1972) is a great spiritual master for the simple reason that he was capable of doing what all great spiritual masters can do: so engage a particular tradition that its greatest insights

The Human and the Holy: The Spirituality of Abraham Joshua Heschel, *by Donald J. Moore, S.J., Fordham University Press, $29.95, 215 pp.*

not only nourish that tradition but illumine others as well. Descended from a distinguished rabbinic family, Heschel combined his Jewish training and lifelong encounter with the Torah to develop an organic view of life rooted in those sources. Furthermore, Heschel was able to mine his tradition in such a way that genuine mysticism, fully engaged with life and tempered to a prophetic edge, emerged. His influence on the Second Vatican Council's statement about the Jews and its condemnation of anti-Semitism in *Nostra aetate* was fundamental. Heschel was also a central figure in the organization of American clergy who opposed the war in Vietnam in the 1960s, as well as being a charismatic teacher and scholar at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America in New York City.

As Donald Moore (a long-time Jesuit participant in Jewish-Christian dialogue) makes clear in this well written and very moving study of Heschel (it is only tangentially a biography), there are themes in Heschel's writings that are central (and compellingly expressed) to any appropriation of biblically based spirituality. Let me cite just a few of the more significant ones: the role of awe at the base of our state of creatureliness which springs from our "ultimate embarrassment" at the largesse of the world in which we find ourselves; the primacy of the deed in biblical religion (hence: no gulf between action and contemplation); prayer not as conversation but as vulnerability and self-disclosure before God. In an excellent final chapter, Moore discusses Heschel's understanding of two of his Hasidic ancestors—the ecstatic and joyful Baal Shem Tov and the austere Kotzker rebbe—to illustrate the inevitable tension that must exist in an authentic religious tradition between ecstasy and law; joy and sorrow; experience and intellect; austerity and exuberance. Heschel's greatest gift to us may be this: we will go back and read the Bible with fresh eyes after having encountered the mind and spirit of this great soul. □

CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 130)

either. I had always thought if I wanted to know about life I could go to an encyclopedia where a biologist—O'Malley is "a physicist"—would tell me that "life is a form of existence characterized by the functions of protoplasm, as manifested in metabolism and growth." I could further ascertain from biology that the human zygote grows and effects a metabolic action, and could therefore conclude that this is human life, a living human being.

An insular physicist can only come to an insular conclusion: "When the church speaks on abortion, using terms like 'life,' it is using a language that my discipline has generally left behind." Is it possible that biologists might feel the same way

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about the jargon of physics?

O'Malley interpolates "person" into the argument only to stumble over it as well. This is a term that can be defined only by philosophy, never by science. Another misapplication of scientific methods.

WILLIAM TALBOT

The sin of scandal

Brooklyn Heights, N.Y.

To the Editors: Despite or perhaps because of the proliferation of articles on homosexual religious [cf. *Commonweal*, January 26], many Catholics including myself are utterly confused. What exactly is the problem?

Seminarians entering the priesthood know that they must live a celibate life, and that it will not be easy. Why should this be more difficult for homosexuals than for heterosexuals, which is the message we seem to be getting? The problem of loneliness also is surely the same for all priests, no matter what their sexual orientation.

As to lesbian nuns—there are many possibilities today of being of service to others without joining a religious community of women dedicated to chastity and obedience.

To be Catholic has always demanded tremendous sacrifices both from married people and even more from single women, many of them unmarried not by choice, who were condemned to sexual abstinence in order to remain in the church.

Is it possible that American society has a higher ratio of self-involved people than other parts of the world? The tremendous emphasis on self-fulfillment and the "American dream" undoubtedly play a part in this.

The greatest sin used to be giving scandal to others. No one seems to take that seriously any more.

JOAN M. COOPER

Faith versus fear

Philadelphia, Pa.

To the Editors: The December 15, 1989 issue contains many good things, but I was particularly moved by Thomas Craughwell's story of his experience ["Should I Have Let Him In?"].

Social Justice & Moral Conscience

Social Ethics
An Examination of American Moral Traditions
Roger G. Betsworth

This book is an excellent source that introduces ethics by focusing on the cultural narratives that shape American images of self and world: the biblical story, the American gospel of success, the idea of well-being, and the global mission of America" . . . . a clear statement of our intellectual past, an illumination of our social present, and a powerful warrant for serious liberal arts education that invites students to think, to discern, to understand, and to adjudicate."
—Walter Brueggemann, Columbia Theological Seminary, Decatur, Georgia
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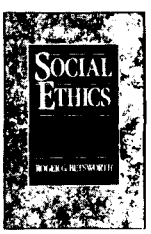

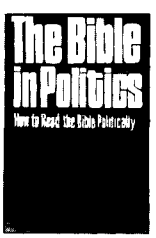

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Until just a few years ago, I was rector of a downtown parish in one of our large collapsing cities where the demands of charity were not so much daily as hourly. Over the years I found that my own attitude toward those who presented themselves and their various needs, as well as toward those who made a nuisance of themselves inside the church buildings, came to change for the worse.

I realized in time that my motive for helping them wasn't to serve Christ in them, but to get rid of them, and that quite automatically I would assume that anybody who looked even the least bit down-and-out was dangerous. Some of them undoubtedly were, but not infrequently it would be nicely dressed folk—even one couple in their evening dress—who would steal things. I soon came to have a kind of fortress mentality; I was protecting the church and its staff all the time, and every time the doorbell rang, my stomach would tighten into knots.

So I understand Caughwell's definition of charity very well indeed, that it is not so much compassion as it is a leap of faith. I had lost the ability to have any faith at all in these people, and their presence drew out of me a response more of fear than of compassionate love. I really think that unless one has such faith, one can degenerate spiritually just as I did. To love one's neighbor is always a risky business, but it is the same risk that Jesus took when he opted for love as against power. To love certainly makes one terribly (in the original sense of that adverb) vulnerable. Yet, it is that very vulnerability which makes love possible. So I pray for the gift of faith to be vulnerable in the face of fear.

(REV.) MICHAEL R. BECKER

Stimulus & response

Niagara Falls, Ont.

To the Editors: *Commonweal* always stimulates and challenges me. This week [February 9] you got me in the Correspondence! It was good to read Msgr. John Tracy Ellis's gem of a letter and to be buoyed by his hope.

I also resonated with John Breslin's review of Mary Gordon's *The Other Side*. One of my favorite authors, she left me feeling disappointed. Now I know why. Your reviewers do a fine job....

While I'm at it, kudos to Tom O'Brien, your movie critic, whom I find to be an excellent guide....

BEN HOGAN, O. CARM.

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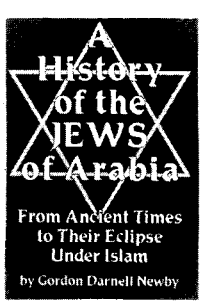

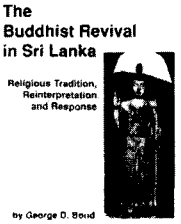

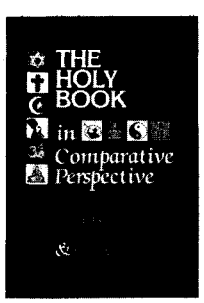

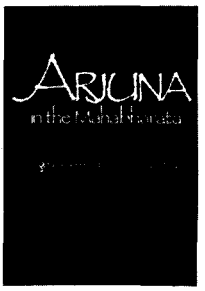

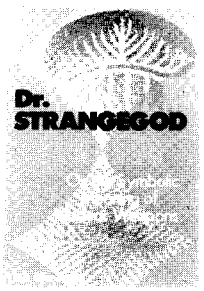

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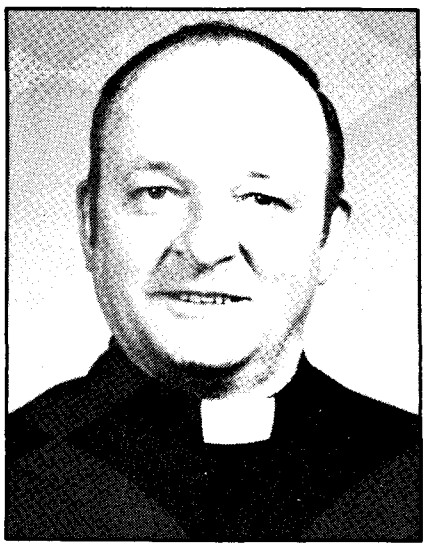

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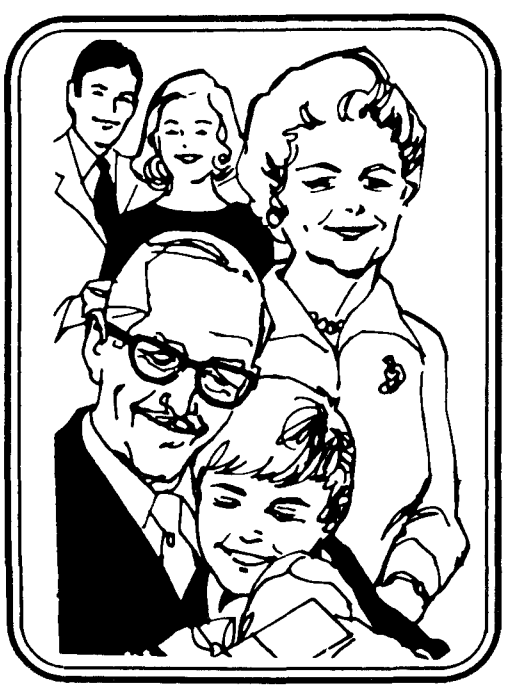

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